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First Unitarian Prayer Book

A LITURGY, Collected Principally from the Book of Common Prayer, for the Use of the First Episcopal Church in Boston; together with the Psalter. . . . 12mo, old sheep (binding worn, later end-leaves). Boston, 1785.

Evans 18938. First edition of what is, in fact, the first Unitarian prayer book, compiled by the Rev. James Freeman and issued by the congregation of King's Chapel, Boston.

John Wright (*Early Prayer Books*) writes: "A Congregation in communion with the Church of England, existed in Boston as early as 1686. . . . During the Revolutionary War and for several years after, the church was weakened by loss of members. During these times . . . James Freeman was in charge as lay reader for a few months. . . . But Mr. Freeman's doctrinal position, especially in regard to the Trinity, was not in harmony with . . . the American Episcopal Church. . . . The growing changes in the minds of some of . . . the congregation led, in 1785, to the revision of the Prayer Book. These changes were so radical that the parish ceased to be an Episcopal Church and became the first Unitarian Society of Boston."

An Attempt to Vindicate Scripture Mysteries, particularly the Doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Atonement, the Renovation of the Holy Ghost, and the Eternity of Future Punishments. [A discourse delivered before the Clergy of the Church of England in Connecticut at their Annual Convention, at New Haven, on June 4, 1760, and commended to the churched and unchurched citizens of Connecticut in the hope of curbing heresy, liberalism, unitarianism, and other doctrinal heterodoxy.] By John Beach 4

The Sanctity of a Christian Temple: Illustrated in a Sermon at the Opening of Trinity Church in Pomfret [now Brooklyn] on April 12, 1771. By John Tyler 31
[An example of an early Anglican dedicatory discourse.]



A T T E M P T

TO VINDICATE

SCRIPTURE MYSTERIES,

PARTICULARLY,

The Doctrine of the HOLY TRINITY, the ATONEMENT of CHRIST, and the RENOVATION of the HOLY GHOST: Also, of the ETERNITY of the Future Punishments:

WITH

Some STRICTURES upon what Mr. J. Taylor hath advanced upon those Points,

I N A

SERMON,

Preached before the Clergy of the Church of England, in Connecticut, at their Annual Convention, at New-Haven, June 4th, 1760.

By J. BEACH, A. M. and a Missionary from the Venerable Society for Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts.

St. MATTHEW. xiii. 25. *While Men sleep, his Enemy came and sowed Tares among the Wheat.*

Printed by JAMES PARKER, and COMPANY,

MDCCLX.

P R E F A C E

*I*T cannot be denied that Arian, Socinian, Pelagian, and Latitudinarian Errors, are gaining Ground in this Country; which, though rise and rampant in these wild Days, were in the ancient Times condemned by the Universal Church in its purest Ages: And it is a Thing of melancholy Consideration, that such an innocent young Country as this, should be debauched by them.-----It seems therefore highly expedient, that the Church of England should bear her Testimony against them; which, as she hath always been the chief Bulwark of the Reformation, seems providentially to have been propagated in this Land, for that End; that, against these and all other Errors, she might support the Cause of pure primitive Christianity; preserving (as indeed she does) the golden Mean against all Extremes:---And that, like the Ark, the ancient Type, she might be a Refuge, amidst the boisterous Waves of this contending World, to which every honest Dove may resort, that can no where else find any Rest for the Soles of his Feet.---I am therefore glad the reverend Author hath been prevailed upon to publish this Discourse, which is very well calculated to obviate these Errors; and I pray GOD to attend it with his Blessing.

S. JOHNSON.

Advertifement.

*I*T is with Pleasure, we the Subscribers, having heard the following Discourse delivered, take this Occasion to testify our Approbation and Esteem thereof; as being agreeable to the sacred Scriptures, to the Doctrine of the first and purest Ages of Christianity, and to the Article and Liturgy of the Church of England: And think we can do no less, than recommend it to the serious Perusal of our respective Missions, uniting our Prayers that the Divine Blessing may attend it.

New-Haven,

4th of June, 1760

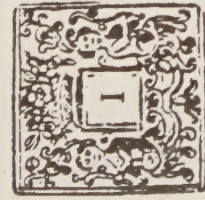
F. BRNEZER FURBERSON,
JOSEPH LAMSON,
LEENEZER DIBBLE,
JEREMIAH LEAMING,
RICHARD MANSFIELD,
ICHABOD CAMP,
EDWARD WINSLOW,
CHRISTOPHER NEWTON,
JAMES SCOVIL,
SAMUEL PETERS.

to the Gentiles, all Orders of Men heard him without any Fear or Shame; but when he was at *Jerusalem*, he was obliged to preach *privately* to those of *Reputation* and *Character*, lest they should be exposed to the Malice of their Country-men; and yet these Zealots, sometimes joined in strict Friendship with the Saducees against Christianity, who denied the Resurrection, and were but little better than Atheists. So *Nicodemus*, who was a Man of *Quality*, in a high Station and Authority among the Jews, tho' he had conceived a most venerable Idea of our LORD, and ardently desired to converse with him, yet dared he not discover his Sentiments to the World, lest he should expose himself to much Obliquy and Reproach, and perhaps entirely ruin his own Character. He therefore paid CHRIST a Visit *incog.* in the Night, and when he was come into his Presence, he complimented him in this Manner; "Sir, I am fully convinced, that you are no ordinary Teacher, but a Messenger sent from Heaven to instruct Men in Matters of the greatest Moment; for the miraculous Facts which you constantly perform, are a full Attestation of your divine Legation."

Nicodemus's Faith, Self-Denial, and Fortitude, were but very imperfect. He doth not acknowledge Jesus to be the *Messiah*: Nor had he so much Courage and Resolution, as to prefer known Truth and Duty to his Reputation and Honour in the World. He was too fond of that Honour which he received from Men: Whereas, he should have been contented with that Honour which cometh from God alone. And seeing he was convinced that JESUS was a Teacher sent from God, he should have glorified God by openly acknowledging his Messenger; and not have been

ST. JOHN, iii. 9.

----- How can these Things be?



It often happens, that the less the real Difference is, between two Parties contending about some Points of Religion, the higher the Contention arises: And by how much, of less Importance the Thing in Controversy is, by so much the more fierce and outrageous our Anger and Hatred grows against those who happen to differ from us; which may, in Part, be owing to this, that in order to justify our unhallowed Wrath and bitter Zeal, we strive to magnify the Errors of those who differ from us, and convert Mole-Hills into Mountains: Whereas, if the Difference was but fairly stated, it would appear too small to be a sufficient Ground for Alienation, much less of Rage and Persecution. Whatever may be the Cause of this unreasonable Conduct, it is certain, that at the first publishing of the Gospel to the World, the Rage of the Jews against it, was vastly more fierce than that of the Gentiles; although Christianity was infinitely nearer akin to the Religion of the Former, than to that of the Latter; and had exactly the same Sort of Evidence of its divine Original. Indeed Christianity was nothing else but the Religion which God, immediately after the Fall revealed to *Adam*, republished in Types by *Moses*, and explained in its utmost Perfection by JESUS CHRIST. Yet, when St. Paul preached

been ashamed or afraid to learn God's Will of him. However, CHRIST treats him tenderly, and doth not upbraid him with his Cowardice and Inconsistency, but suits his Instruction so as to rectify the dangerous Mistakes of his *Pupil*. And he lets him know, tho' he had begun well, yet he must go a great deal further, if he meant to obtain eternal Life, v. 3. *Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily verily I say unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* The Meaning I take to be to this Purpose; "You are dangerously mistaken in thinking that your entertaining a good Opinion of me in private, and so maintaining your worldly Reputation, will recommend you to the Favour of God. So much will not serve your Turn. But if you are in good Earnest to obtain Salvation, you must become an entire Profelyte to that spiritual Religion which I came to publish to the World. You must renounce all worldly Considerations, and openly espouse my Cause; you must by Baptism receive my Spirit, and begin a new and spiritual Life---CHRIST's saying to *Nicodemus*, that he must be born again, if he meant to see the Kingdom of God, is parallel to his saying to another great Man, *Luke 18, 22. Yet lackest thou one Thing, sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven; and come and follow me. To be born again*, certainly denotes the beginning of a new Life: *And to be born of the Spirit*, denotes the beginning of a spiritual and divine Life by the Operation of GOD's holy Spirit. It was the Custom of the Jews when they admitted Profelytes from the Heathen Nations into their Church and sacred Polity, they not only circumcised the Males, but also washed or bap-

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tised all, both Adults and Infants; and then stiled them *regenerate*, or *new-born*: Because they had now changed their Religion, their Nation, and all their Relations; and were entered into a new State, and become as natural Jews.

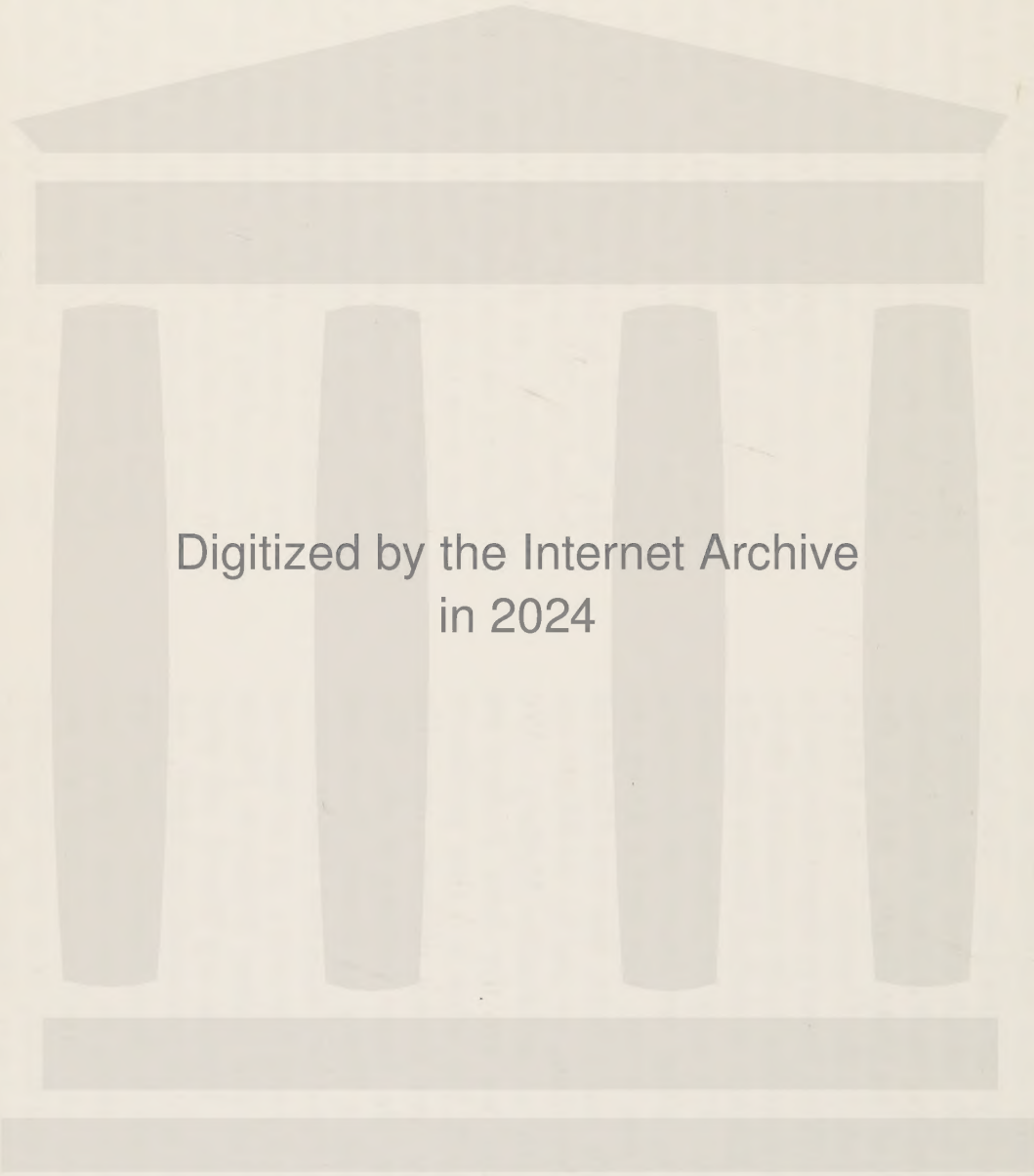
This was a very proper Metaphor to denote so great a Change: Therefore it was strange that *Nicodemus*, a *Master of Israel*, should stumble at a Phrase in common Use among them. But seeing that he mistook CHRIST's Meaning, and understood him in the most gross Sense, to make his Lesson the more intelligible, our LORD repeats it a little more explicitly, *As. v. 5. Jesus answered, Verily verily I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*---To be born of Water, or, as St. Paul calls it, *The Washing of Regeneration*, denotes the outward relative Change made by Baptism. And to be born of the Spirit, is to receive the Spirit of God for the Purpose of Sanctification, for the beginning and maintaining of that spiritual and divine Life in the Soul of Man, whereby the Foundation is laid for an everlasting blessed Life with God, in the World to come. CHRIST observeth to *Nicodemus*, that tho' we do not know how this Life of God in the Soul of Man is produced, and how it is maintained until it endeth in eternal Glory, yet that is no valid Argument against its Existence: For we know not the Nature of the Wind, how it rises, how it overturneth Trees and Buildings, and how it ceaseth; yet we are sure of its Existence by its Effects. So tho' we know not how the Holy Ghost (whose Operations upon our Minds, generally cannot be distinguished from the Motions of our own Thoughts and Affections) doth produce in us that holy Temper and Disposition

Disposition which terminates in the everlasting Vision and Enjoyment of God; yet that so it is, is very certain. For natural Generation can produce no nobler Effect than the animal or natural Life. The spiritual Nature, the divine Life which alone can qualify us for a blessed Immortality, must descend from Heaven, and be the Product of the Holy Ghost; who is the Author of all Holiness in the Creation. Our Lord's Argument from the Wind seems to import thus much; that a Thing is not therefore to be pronounced incredible, because its Essence or formal Nature surpasses our Comprehension. We may be absolutely certain that such a Thing is, altho' we know not how it is, or why it is. We may know, that such a Being existeth and produceth real Effects, tho' the Manner of its Existence and Operation, we can by no Means explain, but it seemeth an unscrutable Mystery. We know very well that we are the same Persons we were some Years past, but what it is that constitutes personal Identity, we cannot discover; or what makes us the same, we know nothing at all. We are sure there is such a Thing as Power, Force and Causality, and that there be Causes and Effects in the World; for we see it every Moment; yet we have no *Idea* or Conception of the hidden Nature or Essence of Power and Force. Nor can any Mortal tell what that is in the Cause, which produceth the Effect, and so necessarily connecteth them together. Shall we then doubt whether there be any such Thing, because it is mysterious and inexplicable, altho' we experience the Truth and Reality of it every Moment? Yet after all, *Nicodemus* was dissatisfied, and would not yield his Assent to what CHRIST had taught, but asketh, *How can these Things be?* The Spirituality and

Mysteriousness

Mysteriousness of the Doctrine made it seem improbable, and caused him to doubt the Truth of it. His Fault lay in this, because the Doctrine was mysterious and surpassed his Understanding to comprehend the *Modus* or Manner of it, and to know how it must be; (tho' he was convinced of the Capacity and Veracity of him who taught it,) yet he doubted of the Truth of it. And he was inconsistent with himself; for he had acknowledged that Jesus was a Teacher come from God, and that Men ought to apply to God's Messengers for Instruction in divine Matters. And after so much was admitted, he ought to have given entire Credit to his Doctrine: And if in some Respects it appeared unintelligible, yet he ought not for that Reason to have cavilled against it; but to have ascribed its Obscurity to his own Incapacity and weakness, as Beginners in all Arts and Sciences do, believing with an implicit Faith at first, until at length they come to see the Truth in the same Light as their Teachers do. But *Nicodemus* had not so much Modesty and Sense of his own Weakness and Ignorance, nor so much Confidence in his divine Instructor who sealed his Doctrine by innumerable uncontested Miracles, as to acquiesce as a Learner in the Veracity and Ability of his Teacher, concerning those Points which he came to him to be instructed in. And a great many *Nicodemuses* there be in the World, who are much more disposed to doubt of, and call in Question, such Truths as God of his condescending Goodness hath been pleased to teach us by his standing Revelation, than to suspect their own Blindness and Incapacity. We all acknowledge the Bible to be the Word of God. The Proofs of its divine Original, tho' not so irresistible but that a Person of a capitious Temper,

whose



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whose Humour prompts him towards Infidelity, may find some Thing in it to cavil, and to wrangle against; yet it is so evident and clear, that no honest Mind and Lover of Truth, can fail of Conviction. The Doctrines and Laws contained in the Holy Bible, are worthy of God; plainly calculated to promote the Glory of God and the Good of Men, and to raise us to the highest Pitch of Virtue and Happiness that human Nature is capable of. The miraculous Facts and innumerable Prophecies recorded throughout the sacred Volume, evidently fulfilled, and now fulfilling, prove the Doctrines and Laws to be divine. That the Bible hath not been forged nor adulterated, we have at this Day the same Proofs, but much stronger, than we have for the Genuineness of any the most creditable History, public Record, or Book of standing Laws, now in Use in any Nation.

Now this Revelation containeth many Discoveries of an extraordinary Nature, relating to the invisible and spiritual World, which lie quite out of the Road of common Experience. When therefore we apply ourselves to the Study and Contemplation of these heavenly Doctrines, we presently find our Intellects *non-plussed* as to the Manner of them; many Mysteries start up which we cannot fathom, many Knots appear, which we cannot untie, and Difficulties which we cannot surmount. Now what shall we do in this Perplexity? Shall we conclude that there is no Truth in such Doctrines as are clearly and repeatedly taught in the holy Bible, because there is a Difficulty attending them? Then for the same Reason we must part with all religious Truths, both natural and revealed;† for natural Religion

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+ Tho' I use the common Distinction of *natural and revealed Religion*, yet I do not think, that there ever hath been any true Religion discovered by

ligion hath its Mysteries as well as revealed. And if we are too arrogant to believe Mysteries, we must turn Atheists, and even deny our Senses. And yet even that will not mend the Matter; for then we shall be haunted with the most palpable and shocking Absurdities of all.

Is it not then more reasonable to suppose, that in the holy Bible, the Wonders of the Spiritual World are discovered to us; not indeed, as they really are in themselves, but in such a Light, as our weak Eyes can best bear the Sight of them? And that since heavenly Things must be revealed to us in earthly Language, and to our low Capacities, or not at all; this must unavoidably make them appear to us unaccountable? And tho' God revealeth them to us in such a Manner as best suiteth our present Capacity, yet when we cease to think and speak as Children, and enter into the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, we shall then see them as they are, and all Obscurity and Mystery will vanish in a Moment?

Perhaps,

by the meer Light of Nature: But for all the fine Schemes of Morality, called *natural Religion*, we are indebted to the Father of Lights, for his Revelations afforded to Mankind from the very Beginning; without which, I believe, Men would have had no Religion at all, or that which would have been worse than none. For demonstratively to discern the evident Connection of Truths and Duties, when by the Help of Revelation we are brought to the Knowledge of those Truths and Duties; and to discover the same, with the divine Authority enjoining them upon us, by our own Sagacity; are two very different Things: And it doth by no Means follow, that Men are capable of the *Latter*, because they are of the *Former*. The right Notion of *natural Religion* is, not those divine Truths and Duties which meer unimpaired Nature would ever have discovered of itself, (for they, as appears by undeniable Facts, would have been very few, if any,) but those which having been discovered by Teaching, either Divine or Traditional, do, upon due Consideration, evidently appear to be founded in the Nature of the Things themselves. Whereas, *revealed Religion*, properly so called, relates to Matters above our Reason, and Matters of meer Institution.

Perhaps, you will say, we must follow Reason, as our Guide, and not believe what we have no good Reason for.

This I readily grant: Reason must be our Guide in Religion: We must embrace nothing as true, but what we have good Reason to believe is so. But then, we must know when we have good Reason for our Belief, and not reject that Evidence which it is no Disparagement to the strongest Reason to yield to. When once a Proposition is proved to be true by many concurring Passages of God's Word, let the Manner of it remain ever so unaccountable, yet we have good Reason to assent to it. For we certainly do not understand the Essence of any Thing in this World. We cannot conceive how Grass and Trees can grow as they do; how our Blood can circulate, or how our Souls can think, will, remember, or move our Bodies. The whole World is a Mystery to us, and we are a Mystery to ourselves. Shall a Mystery then startle us, and cause us to withhold our Assent to a Doctrine proved to be true by God's Testimony? Human Reason hath its Province and Sphere to act in; but when it goeth beyond its proper Bounds, it becomes Folly and Arrogancy; then the Wisdom of Man is Foolishness with God: By our Reason we must try a Revelation, whether it be of God, by Reason we must judge of the Meaning of any Passage in holy Writ.

But then it is contrary to Reason and to that Modesty which becometh Man, *who is born like the wild Asses Colt*, to conclude, that a Doctrine which is plainly taught by the holy Spirit, is absurd and to be exploded, merely because of the Obscurity which attendeth it; when that Obscurity doth not arise from the imperfection of the Revelation, but from the Weakness and

and Darkness of our own Understandings. Is it not the most unreasonable Thing in the World, and next to Madness, when an Article of Religion of the highest Importance is proved by a great Number of concurring Texts of holy Scripture, for us to slight and ridicule it, merely because we are not capable of distinctly explaining it, and of clearing up all the Difficulties which belong to it? For when God is pleased to reveal to us his Nature, and the wonderful Things of the spiritual World, common Reason and a very small Portion of Modesty must teach us in that Case, to expect and to prepare ourselves to meet with many unaccountable and incomprehensible Things in such a Revelation, As our Lord observed to *Nicodemus*, *John* iii. 12. *If I have told you earthly Things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly Things?* If Nature and Providence abound with Mysteries, is it a strange Thing if we meet with the like in Revelation?

But, to come to Particulars: (Besides what I have already spoken of, *viz.* Our Renovation by the Holy Ghost) among many Instances which might be given of Doctrines plainly taught in holy Writ, which yet have been cavilled at, and exploded, upon the Score of Difficulties attending our understanding them, I shall name three more. *First*, The Doctrine of the sacred Trinity: *Second*, The Expiation or Atonement of CHRIST: *Third*, The Eternity of the Punishments of such as die impenitent. These I choose to consider distinctly, because they are fiercely attacked by that Spirit of Innovation, which is growing very much into Fashion.

First, As to the Doctrine of the blessed Trinity, if it had been intimated only once or twice in the Holy Bible

Bible, in that Case we might have been at a Loss to know what to make of it. But as the Matter now stands, from the Beginning of *Genesis* to the End of the *Revelations* there seems to be a plain Declaration of this Proposition, viz. That altho' the Godhead is but one, yet in this Godhead there are three distinct Persons or Subsistences. The very first Sentence in the holy Book seems plainly to reveal the blessed Trinity. *In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.* In the Original the Word is plural, Gods, or the divine Persons created the Heaven and the Earth. And we know, that the Hebrew Language is very-exact, so that one Letter added to a Word, augments its Meaning: As when God changed the Names of *Abram* and *Sarai*, for *Abraham* and *Sarah*, it denoted a great Alteration in their State. And the same Word is always translated Gods, when it is applied to the Heathen Deities. And agreeable to this, it is remarkable, *Eccl.* xii. 1. In the Original it is plural, Remember now thy CREATORS, in the Days of thy Youth. So *Gen.* i. 26. And God said let US make Man in OUR Image, after OUR Likeness. Here is certainly the Appearance of more Persons than one in the Godhead: For if God be but one Person, where is the Propriety of such plural Expressions? So, *Gen.* iii. 22. And the Lord God said, behold, the Man is become as ONE of US. *Gen.* ii. 7. God said, Go let US go down. When the Deity saith, US, OUR, and ONE of US, how can we expect any clearer Intimations of a Plurality of Persons in the divine Nature than these be? But to evade this a twofold Answer is invented: First, It is pretended that God here speaketh in the Stile of Princes, who say, We, instead of I. But I would observe this is but a late Custom:

Custom: No Instance of it is to be found in *Moses's* Writings, or in any Writings for some Thousands of Years after his Time. And the Foundation of that modern Mode of Speech, is because Kings represent many, i. e. all their People; but this can not be the Reason of the Almighty's using that Stile.

Secondly, They assume, that God here speaketh to the Angels.

But there is not the least Foundation for such a Supposition. Nor is here the least Intimation of the infinite Being's putting himself upon a Level with his Angels. And when there is no warning given of any Creatures being taken into Council with God, and yet God saith, *Let US go down, let US make Man in OUR Image and after OUR Likeness, and Man is become as ONE of US*, such Expressions necessarily induce us to think, that there are more Persons than one in God. How can we avoid such an Opinion, when we are so naturally led into it, unless we willfully shut our Eyes against the Light, and resolve to pervert the plainest Declarations, and to put off the clearest Assertions, with any Kind of Evasions? Which Method would defeat the Design of the clearest Writings in the World. If we indulge such a Liberty, no Book can teach us any certain Truths: For evidently there is as much Difference between *I, Me*, and *Mine*, and *US, ONE of US*, and *OUR*, as there is between a single Person and a Plurality of Persons. Again, we read, *Gen.* iv. 1. That when *Eve* had born her first Son, she called his Name *Cain*, because, said she, *I have gotten a Man from the Lord.* Which in the original Hebrew, is Word for Word thus, I have gained a Man the JEHOVAH. From hence it evidently appeareth, that our first Parents knew that the

the SEED of the Woman, who was to redeem them from all the Mischief which the Devil had brought upon them, was to be JEHOVAH, or the eternal God incarnate; tho' through their eager Desire and Expectation of his soon appearing, they mistook their first Child, for IMMANUEL. I would observe once for all, that whenever we meet with the Name *Jehovah*, which is generally translated the LORD, it always denotes the one eternal self-existing God; and never is applied to any meer Creature. *Pf. lxxxiii. 18. Thou whose Name alone is JEHOVAH.* We read, *Gen. xviii.* that the LORD JEHOVAH appeared unto *Abraham* in this Form, three Travellers came to him and eat and drank with him, and one of them is called the LORD JEHOVAH; and when the two Angels departed towards *Sodom*, still that divine Person continued and talked with *Abraham*. Who could this be but the second Person in the holy Trinity, who before his Incarnation appeared in Human Form; whilst the Father no Man hath seen or can see? This adorable Mystery, is in a Multitude of Places in the Old Testament intimated, altho' not so clearly revealed as in the New. Thus, *Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26. The Lord (Jehovah) blest thee and keep thee. The Lord (Jehovah) make his Face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord (Jehovah) lift up his Countenance upon thee, and give thee Peace:* Which Benediction of the holy Trinity in the Language of the New Testament, runs thus, *The Grace of our Lord Jesus-Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you.* All Happiness floweth from the Father's Blessing, the Son's Grace, and the Spirit's Peace.

Again, *Deut. vi. 4. Hear O Israel, the Lord, our God,*

God, is one Lord; from whence, the modern Jews argue against the holy Trinity. But when it is rightly understood, it is a very full Proof of it: For, the LORD (*Jehovah*) denoteth the divine Essence, or Godhead; and the Word GOD, is plural, and denotes the three Persons, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier: And the Text may be thus paraphrased. Hear O *Israel*, JEHOVAH (the divine Nature and Essence) who is our God, our Creator, Redeemer and Comforter; is but one *Jehovah*, (one divine Nature, Essence or Substance.) Or thus, the Father is *Jehovah*, the Son *Jehovah*, and the Spirit *Jehovah*; and yet they are but one *Jehovah*. This Sentence is introduced with a Note of Attention, *Hear O Israel*; but is it any Thing surprising, to hear that One is One, or that the LORD is one LORD? Therefore I cannot avoid thinking that the Word GOD, here imports a different Sense from the Word LORD, or JEHOVAH; that is, it denotes the blessed Trinity, who are co-essential.

Those Things which in the Old Testament are appropriated to the one true God, in the New Testament are expressly ascribed to Jesus-CHRIST, thus, *Pf. xlv. 6. Thy Throne O God, is for ever and ever. Ps. cii. 25. Of old hast thou laid the Foundation of the Earth, &c.* Now, we find by *Hebr. i. 10.* that these Things were spoken to, and of CHRIST; which implies, that he is the true God. So, *Isa. vi. 1, 7, 8, 9, 10.* There the Prophet tells us, that he saw the Glory of the LORD, and heard the Angels crying and saying one to another, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. And he said, go and tell this People, bear ye indeed, but understand not, &c.* Now St. *John*, when he citeth this Passage, acquainteth us, that this

Glory

saw, was the Glory of CHRIST. *John* xii. 41. *These Things said Esaias, when he saw his Glory and spake of him.* Again, *Jer.* xxiii. 6. The Name of CHRIST is the LORD JEHOVAH, (our Righteousness). Another clear Declaration of CHRIST's divine Nature we find, *Micab*, v. 2. *Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the Thousands of Judah, yet cut of thee shall be come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose Goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* So, *Zach.* ii. 8, 11, *For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, The Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee. Here is one JEHOVAH of Hosts sent by another JEHOVAH of Hosts, to dwell amongst them.* *Zach.* xii. 10. God says, *They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, which in the New Testament is said to be fulfilled in CHRIST; who must therefore be God.* Indeed God could not be pierced by them, unless he were incarnate.

As the Knowledge of the holy Trinity, and of the Atonement which the Son of God in our Nature was to make for the Sins of the World, became necessary to Mankind after the Fall, as a Foundation of religious Hope, and a proper Encouragement to Repentance: So it is reasonable to think, that the Method of offering bloody Sacrifices by Way of Expiation, was then instituted by God himself; in order to preserve among Men the Belief and Expectation of the Coming of the Lamb of God, who was to take away the Sins of the World: And who was therefore called the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, being so exhibited in those Types: As the Lord's Supper was instituted to keep up the Remembrance of that great Sacrifice afterwards, until the End of the World. For as this Custom did prevail early and universally, not

not only among Idolaters, but among the most religious Worshipers of the true God, such as *Abel* and *Noah*; so Reason alone would never have led Men so universally into such a Practice to placate the Deity. And as the Knowledge of these Mysteries and Institutions, were preserved by oral Tradition, so in Processes of Time they were corrupted, but yet not entirely lost, even among the Gentiles: For when *Nebuchadnezzar* and the *Roman* Centurion speak of the Son of God, I cannot think, but that it was owing to the Remains of the primitive Revelation: Or at least they had learned it from the Jews. For the Jews in their most degenerate State, knew that God had one Son, and that this Son of God was of the same Nature with the Father. And they condemned CHRIST for Blasphemy, because he answered affirmatively to their Question, *Art thou the Son of God?* So, *John* v. 18. *Therefore the Jews sought to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.* Which implieth, that they knew the Son to be of the same Nature and equal with the Father. Therefore the Writers of the New Testament make no Kind of Apology for their teaching the Doctrine of the Trinity; which might have been expected, if it had been entirely new and unheard of before. Thus *St. John* beginneth his Gospel, *In the Beginning was the WORD; which might appear very strange and unintelligible, if we do not consider, that the WORD of God, was a Term in Use at that Time to denote a Person in the Deity, or the only Son of God.* Tho' the modern Jews, merely in Spight to Christianity, are Enemies to the Doctrine of the Trinity, yet in the Ages which preceded CHRIST Advent it was not so. But the *Word* of God, and the *Word*

Word of the LORD, is a common Term in the most ancient Jewish Writings now extant, to denote a divine Person.

* And when the Text hath only JEHOVAH, they they paraphrase it, *The Word of the Lord*; for which no Reason can be given, if they did not believe that there are more Persons than one in JEHOVAH. Thus, Gen. xxviii, 20, 21. *Jacob vowed a Vow, if God will be with me, then shall the Lord be my God*; which they translate thus, *Jacob vowed a Vow, saying, if the WORD of the Lord will be with me and keep me, &c. then shall the WORD of the Lord be my God*. In which they plainly acknowledge the WORD of the LORD to be a divine Person; and suppose that *Jacob* dedicated himself to him, as to his God. So, on Gen. iii. 22. they use these Words; the WORD of the LORD said, *Bebold Adam whom I have created, is my only begotten in the World, as I am the only begotten in the Heavens above*.

Indeed the Christian Religion, which teacheth the Doctrine of the con-substantial Trinity, and Satisfaction for Sin by the Blood of the *Messiah*, is as old as the Fall, being then preached to our guilty First Parents, to encourage their Repentance with the Hopes of Pardon and eternal Salvation upon their new Obedience; which Mysteries before CHRIST's coming were veiled with Types and Figures, but now appear with open Face in the Gospel. And there never hath been but this one true Religion. All other Religions which have ever appeared in the World, have been only Corruptions of, or Excesses from this divine System. And *Melchietism* is nothing but a corrupt Branch of the Heresy of *Arius*: So that we have the

* See Bishop Patrick's Comment, upon *Levit. v. 19*.

the Consolation to know, that we live by the same Faith, and venture in the same Bottom with all true Believers from the Beginning.

Having cited a few out of many Testimonies in the Old-Testament, let us now come to the New. Here, it appeareth in so full and strong a Light, that one would think, that no honest Mind could fail of Conviction; For throughout the New-Testament there is a constant and clear recognizing of three divine Persons by the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy-Spirit. Thus, *Matt. xxviii. 19.---Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy-Ghost. Luke i. 35. The Holy-Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*. Here each divine Person is distinctly named, the Holy-Ghost, the Highest, i. e. ¹³ The Father, and the Son of God. *John xv. 26. When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me*. Here is the Son who sends, the Spirit who is sent, and the Father from whom he proceedeth. *1 Cor. vi. 11. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God*. Here the three blessed Authors of our Salvation are distinguished from each other. The LORD JESUS, and GOD. i. e. The Father, and his Spirit, *Eph. ii. 18. Through him we both have an Access by one Spirit to the Father*. Here is the Son through whom, the Spirit by whom, and the Father to whom we are reconciled, and have Access: *2 Cor. xiii. 14. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all*.

all. Now, why should we in Baptism be dedicated to the Son and Holy Ghost, equally and exactly in the same Manner as to the Father, and why blessed in their Names just as in his, and why should all be commanded to worship and honour the Son, as they do the Father, if the Son and Holy Spirit be not divine Persons? If they are not equal Co-partners in the Godhead, why should they have an equal Share of our Adorations? It is certainly one great Design of the Christian Religion to banish Idolatry and Creature-Worship out of the World, and our Lord Jesus hath taught us to worship one God alone. Would it not then be a strange Inconsistency, if this same Gospel set up two meer Creatures to be worshipped and adored together with the Father? That the Rite of our entering into the Church should be performed by an Act Creature-Worship, and our Dismissal from our solemn public Assemblies should be an Act of Idolatry?

Our Lord saith, *John*, x. 30. *I and my Father are ONE.* Not one Person, (as Sabellius dreamt) but one Thing, one Being, one Essence. For ONE, in the Original is not of the masculine, but of the neuter Gender. So it is, *1 John*, v. 7. *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.* † i. e. One Nature and Substance. So, *Phil.* ii. 6. *Christ Jesus, who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God.* *John* x. 38. *The Father is in me, and I in him.* How can the Father and the Son be reciprocally in each other, unless they are consubstantial?

† Some doubt of the Genuineness of this Text, because not found in some ancient Copies; but it cannot reasonably be doubted, when it was quoted and alluded to by St. *Cyrilian* and *Terullian*, within about 150 Years of the Time of St. *John*.

CHRIST saith, *John* xii. 45. *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.* How can this be true, if he were not the same Substance with the Father?

If there be no Perfection or Attribute belonging to the Deity, but what is in holy Writ ascribed to CHRIST; if there be no Honour or Service due to the true God, but what is likewise due to CHRIST; if no Works performed by the Father, but what likewise are performed by CHRIST, except personal Acts and Properties, such as begetting the Son, and communicating the Godhead to him by eternal Generation: If this be really the Case, I would fain know, how we can deny CHRIST's real and eternal Godhead, without renouncing the Bible. And that the Former is true, will easily appear; e. g. Is the Father the true God? So is CHRIST. *1 John* v. 20. *We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.* Is the Father the Great God? So is CHRIST. *Titus* ii. 13. *The Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Is the Father the Supreme God, and blessed for ever? So is CHRIST. *Rom.* ix. 5. Is the Father the mighty God? So is CHRIST. *Isaiah* ix. 6, 7. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given--his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father.* Is God eternal, without Beginning or Ending? So is CHRIST. *Rev.* i. 8, 11. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord; which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.* These are the Words of the Son of Man. Is our God, the living God, or he who liveth? So is CHRIST. *Rev.* i. 18. *I am he who liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more.* None but the true God can say in this Sense, I am he who

who liveth. Is our God alone the JEHOVAH? So is CHRIST; as hath been largely proved already. Is God the necessary and self-existing Being, and therefore saith, *I AM*? Is God unchangeable? So is CHRIST. *Hebr* xiii. 8. *Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever.* When God would distinguish himself from all other Beings, and take to himself his peculiar Titles, he saith, *Isa* xlv. 6. *I am the First, and I am the Last, and beside me there is no God.* Yet these Perfections our LORD assumes to himself. Is the true God the Almighty Creator of all Things? So is CHRIST. *John* i. 3. *All Things were made by him; and without him was not any Thing made, that was made.* *Coll* i. 16. *By him were all Things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: All Things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all Things, and by him all Things consist.* Doth God preserve and uphold all Things? So doth CHRIST. *Heb* i. 13. *Who being the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding all Things by the Word of his Power.* *John* v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* Is God omnipresent? So is CHRIST. *Matt* xviii. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* *John* iii. 13. *No Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.* He was in Heaven at that Instant, when being upon Earth, he spake these Words. Is God omniscient, and doth he know all Things? So doth CHRIST. *John* xxi. 17, Saith Peter to him, *Lord thou knowest all Things.* Doth God alone know the Hearts of Men? *1 Kings* viii.

39. *Thou, even thou only knowest the Hearts of all the Children of Men.* So doth CHRIST. *John* ii. 24, 25. *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all Men, and needed not that any should testify of Man; for he knew what was in Man.* Is God the holy and peerless Being? So is CHRIST. *Rev* iii. 7. *These Things saith he that is holy, he that is true.* Is God the LORD and Owner of the Universe? So is CHRIST. *Acts* x. 36. *He is Lord of all.* Is all religious Honour, Adoration and Worship due to God alone? So it is to CHRIST. *John* v. 23. *That all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* *Heb* i. 6. *When he bringeth in the first begotten into the World, he saith, and let all the Angels of God worship him.* Is God alone to be loved with all our Heart and served with all our Strength? So is CHRIST. *Phil* i. 21. *For to me to live is Christ.* Is an absolute Trust and Affiance due to God alone? So it is to CHRIST. *Psa* ii. 12. *Blessed are all they who put their Trust in him.* Lastly, Is God alone the proper Object of Prayer, being able to hear and help at all Times? So is CHRIST. *Acts* vii. 59. *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* Christians are stilled, such as call upon the Name of Christ. *1 Cor* i. 2. *All that in every Place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.* Seeing then, every Thing peculiar to the one true God, is so fully, frequently and clearly in holy Writ assumed of CHRIST, how shall we know by the Bible, that there is any true God, at all, if we deny CHRIST to be such?

If Self-Existence, if Eternity, if Omnipotence, if Omnipresence, if Omniscience, &c. do not prove CHRIST's natural Divinity, pray, how can we possibly distinguish between the true God, and a meer Creature?

ture? For my Part, if I could once think, that the Son was not co-essential and con-substantial with the Father, I should immediately conceive a very low Opinion of the Scriptures: For tho' I should esteem the Doctrine false, yet I could not possibly persuade myself, that it is not a Scripture Doctrine.

And as the Father and the Son, are Omnipresent, so is the Holy Ghost. *Pf. cxxxix. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Are the Father and Son omniscient? So is the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 10. The Spirit searches all Things, yea, the deep Things of God. May we swear only by God? Deut. vi. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name. So may we swear by the Holy Ghost. Rom. ix. 1. I say the Truth in Christ, I lie not, my Conscience also bearing me Witness in the Holy Ghost. Are our Bodies the Temples of God? So are they the Temples of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth within you? Are the Father and Son Almighty? So is the Holy Ghost. The Creation of the World is ascribed to him. *Gen. i. 2. The Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters. Job xxvi. 13. By his Spirit he garnished the Heavens.* The miraculous Works of CHRIST, which none but God could perform, were the Works of the Father and of the Spirit. *Jehn x. 37. If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not. Matt. xii. 28.---If I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God.* And as the Son and Holy Spirit are God, so they are represented, as being as distinct from the Father, and from each other, as any three Persons whatsoever. The Father did beget, the Son is begotten, the holy Spirit proceedeth, and is sent. He who begetteth, is a distinct Person from him who is begotten*

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of him. So the holy Spirit must be a distinct Person from the Father and the Son, from whom he *proceedeth*. The Father and the Spirit, were not made Flesh; but the Son was. The Blood of CHRIST was the Blood of God, *Acts xx. 28.* But it was not the Blood of the Father, nor of the Spirit. And as the Holy Ghost is distinct from the Father and Son, whose Spirit he is; so he is a real Person, and that divine. *1 Cor. xii. 11, But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit; dividing to every Man severally as he will.* The Spirit and his Gifts are plainly distinguished. Will and Choice belong only to a Person. *Acts xiii. 2. The Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the Work whereunto I have called them. He is the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, he convinceth the World of Sin, &c.* These are all personal Actions. And to lie unto the Holy Ghost, is to lie unto God. *Acts v. 3, 5.*

Thus, we see, that the Doctrine of a co-essential Trinity is not built upon a few obscure Expressions in holy Writ, but it is most clearly and repeatedly taught in innumerable Passages throughout the holy Bible. It is now Time to inquire what there may be to outvie and weigh down all this Scripture Evidence? The most weighty Objection that ever I could hear of, is to this Purpose: Three Persons denote three distinct and separate Beings. And it is impossible that there should be three real Persons of Men, without being three Men; therefore it is impossible that there should be three Persons in the Godhead, unless there be three Gods; and three Gods, altho' we should suppose them to exist in ever so great an Harmony or Trithemism, is abhorrent to Christian Ears. They therefore, rather choose to think that CHRIST's Supreme Godhead,

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is no more, than, *as he is by the Father appointed Lord, King, and Governor of all.* This Appointment and Commission, is *our Lord's Supreme Godhead.*†

But I would observe, That the Word Person, (tho' Scriptural) when applied to this Mystery, doth not convey altogether the same Idea, as when it is applied to the Creatures. But it is used in this Case, because we have no proper Term in Human Language to express it by. We mean no more, than that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; all subsisting in one Godhead, or divine Essence; and yet the Father is not the Son, nor the Father or Son the Holy Spirit. And where is the Absurdity, or Contradiction in this Representation which is made in the holy Scripture? We do not say that three Persons are but one Person, or that but one God is three Gods; nor any Thing equivalent.

All the Difficulty ariseth from our not comprehending the divine Nature, which admitteth of a Plurality of Persons in one and the same Essence; while our Nature doth not so. And we ought not to measure the divine Nature by our own: For that is true when ascribed to God, which is false and contradictory when applied to Men. To say that a Thousand Years are as one Day, and one Day as a Thousand Years, is false when affirmed of Men, but true with Regard to the Deity: He is no older now, than when he created the World. God's Manner of existing is so infinitely different from ours, that we should be very cautious of judging of his Nature by our own. And, do those Men get rid of all Difficulties, who deny the Son's eternal Generation? They are compelled to acknowledge that CHRIST is Supreme God: But then they say

† See Mr. *John Taylor's* Notes on Rom. xi. §.

say, his Supreme Godhead is only by Appointment or Commission. If so, then any Man that ever lived on Earth, might have been the Supreme God; if the Father had been pleased to appoint him to it. They deny him to be by Nature God; yet they give him the Honour and Worship which is due only to the living and true God, If they say that God's Command obligeth us to adore the Son, equally with the Father; they say true: But then, while they think the Son a meer Creature, and the Object of our Adoration only by Appointment, they must think, that God's Laws are not founded in the Nature of Things, and are inconsistent with themselves; and that they oblige us to Creature-Worship, and Idolatry; when at the same Time he hath most expressly forbidden it: And hath declared himself a *jealous God*; and that *he will not give his Glory to another.*

They allow CHRIST to be Omniscient and Almighty; for he created the World, and will judge Mankind; which requireth infinite Knowledge and Power. But then they deny his Eternity, and say he is but a temporary *Supreme God*; an Almighty God, who once was nothing, and may be reduced to nothing again; and can you form even in your Imagination, greater Absurdities? Thus some Men strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel.

Secondly. I come now to the second Article above-mentioned, viz. CHRIST's Satisfaction. When once Men have robbed CHRIST of his divine Nature, it is not so great a Wonder to see them attempting to degrade his Atonement, and to hear them saying, || *That it is no Disparagement to the Dignity of our blessed Lord, or the glorious Work of Redemption, that among Men are*

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|| Mr. *J. Taylor's* Paraphrase on Rom. p. 48. 51. 21 Edit.

found Actions similar to his, both in Nature and Effect. And that he cannot better explain himself, when he says Christ's Love and Obedience, is a just Foundation of the divine Grace, than by the following Instance. There have been Masters willing, now and then, to grant a Relaxation from Study, or even to remit deserved Punishment, in Case any one Boy, in Behalf of the whole School, or of the Offender, would compose and present a Distich or Copy of Latin Verses. This at once shewed the Master's Love and Lenity; and was a very proper Expedient for promoting Learning and Benevolence in the Society of little Men training up for future Usefulness, and, under due Regulations, very becoming a good and wise Tutor. And one may say, that the kind Verse-Maker purchased the Favour in both Cases; or that the Learning, Ingenuity, Industry, Goodness, and Compliance with the Governor's Will and Pleasure, was a just Ground, or Foundation of the Pardon and Refreshment, or a proper Reason of granting them.

So then, the great Mystery of Man's Redemption, which nonplusseth the Intellectuals of Angels, 1 Pet. i. 12. is become a very plain, easy, and familiar Thing: So far from being worthy of the Study of Cherubims, that every Child at the first Glance, may understand the *Ground* and *Foundation* of it. But alas this Representation is as distant from Truth, as it is from Mystery: For,

First, It is built upon the Popish Doctrine of Works of Supererogation; or voluntary Works, besides, over and above God's Commandments, which is absolutely false, arrogant and impious.

Had CHRIST been a meer Creature, tho' the most innocent and virtuous in the Universe, and had he died a violent Death a Thousand Times, and in every

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Death had he endured a Thousand Times as much Shame and Pain as he did upon the Cross; tho' his Obedience and Sufferings might have rendered him inconceivably dear to God, yet would they not have merited Salvation for any other Creature, For all this would be no more than paying a Debt. Every Creature oweth this to his Maker, to do, and to suffer all that he layeth upon them. When we love God with all our Heart, and serve him with all our Strength, (which, to be sure, is the Utmost we can do) we only discharge our Debts to him; we are unprofitable Servants, and have done no more than was our Duty. Tho' the School-Boy may do more than his Task, and so merit Pardon and Relaxation for his Fellow Scholars; yet no Creature can do any more than the Task which God hath set him. That which makes CHRIST's Obedience productive of Effects more noble, not only in Degree, but in Nature or Kind, is, that it is not only eminent and perfect, but it is the Obedience of God, and not of a meer Creature. And tho' CHRIST did his Father's Will in undertaking the Work of our Redemption, yet was it not a Task which he was obliged to, as all that we can do for God, is.

Secondly, So far is it from being true, that we can purchase God's Favours for others by our Obedience, and buy off their deserved Punishments by our eminent Worth, as the School-Boy is supposed to do, that we cannot obtain Pardon for our own Sins, nor Acceptance for the best Works we ever performed, without an Interest in the Blood of CHRIST. The holiest Man that ever lived, is a Sinner, under Guilt, and stands in Need of Mercy. The Law affordeth no Mercy. The best Work that ever such an eminent

nent Saint as *Abraham* did, is defective, sinful, and exposeth to Punishment when tried by the perfect Law. The only Foundation of our Pardon and Acceptance, is the Blood of that *immaculate Lamb* which *taketh away the Sins of the World*. Good Men it is true, *work out their own Salvation*: Nay, in some Sense they *save* others; but not in that Sense as *CHRIST*, *save*th us; not by meriting, not by *purchasing*; but by qualifying themselves for that Salvation which *CHRIST* alone hath purchased. And even this is not of themselves, but is owing to the Influences of the holy Spirit, which *CHRIST* has purchased; and is the Gift of God.

What this Author calls eminent *Worth* in such Men as *Abraham*, which, he says, is *similar*, or like in its *Nature* and in its *Effects* to that Obedience and Merits of *CHRIST*, by which he redeemed the World, because it did procure Blessings for others; is so far from being *similar in its Nature and Effects*, that it is for *CHRIST*'s Righteousness alone, as the meritorious Cause, that God doth at all accept, or is pleased with their imperfect Obedience.

Our Obedience, if perfect, would be only paying a Debt; but as it is very imperfect, and doth not qualify with God's perfect Law, it would be sinful Disobedience and Unworthiness, were it not for *CHRIST*'s invaluable Merits; which have procured for us the Covenant of Grace. So that all the Blessings and Rewards which ever have been bestowed upon good Men for their moral Worth, or upon others for their Sakes, are really and truly, the blessed Effects and Fruits of *CHRIST*'s Blood; in whom God is *reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them*. The Law requireth perfect Obedience:

ence: Whether God can consistently with his Wisdom and Justice dispense with the Law, is not the Question. That he hath not done so, is out of Question. The best Man's Obedience, when compared with the Law, hath the Nature of Sin. Now as it is the Blood of *CHRIST* that cleanseth from all Sin, so the sinful Imperfections of good Men's Obedience, are forgiven upon his Account, and the Reward ableness of their imperfect good Works, ariseth from his infinite Worthiness.

Where was there ever a more eminent Instance of moral Worth than *St. Paul*? Yet he said truly, *I am Nothing*. All his Worth was derived from *CHRIST*. It is very true, good Men have, and must have a personal Righteousness in Respect to the Law of Grace. But they have no Righteousness, no Worthiness at all, in Respect to that perfect Law which *CHRIST* fulfilled. Our Obedience is a subordinate not a co-ordinate Cause with *CHRIST*'s in our Salvation: Or rather it is only a necessary Qualification in us, requisite to render us capable of an Interest in the Merits of his Obedience. And tho' we must imitate *CHRIST*, yet we can no more imitate him in redeeming, than in creating the World. To what Purpose doth this Author argue from its being our Duty to die for *CHRIST*, and to lay down our Lives for the Brethren, that therefore we must merit in the same Manner as *CHRIST* did; unless he means to prove, that we must redeem one another; nay, redeem *CHRIST*; as he hath redeemed us?

In a Word, if our Obedience, which hath in it the Nature of Sin, be of the same Nature with spotless Innocence and perfect Obedience; if Law and Gospel be one and the same Thing; if to believe, re-

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pent, and accept of Pardon; be the same Thing as never to need Repentance or Forgiveness; if Grace and Works be the same; then may CHRIST's Obedience and our's be the same in Kind, and Produce the same, or similar Effects; but not otherwise. Nay,

Thirdly. Let us suppose that CHRIST, being a meer Creature, did a great deal more than he needed, or than God required, and that his overplus Merits were imputed to us, and set to our Account: Yet, how could this redeem us? Our sad Case was thus: *Adam* had forfeited his Right to Immortality, and had communicated to us a corrupt and mortal Nature, without a Possibility of escaping Death, or a Power of rising again. So that we were lost, dead, and under the Dominion of the Devil, *who had the Power of Death.* Now God sent his Son into the World, *that we might live through him.* He satisfied the Law by dying, He died not as a Debt, not by Compulsion, as other Men do, but at his own Election, *John, x, 18. No Man taketh my Life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again.* His human Nature being vitally united to the Divine, and the Law being satisfied, it was impossible for him to be detained by Death. And now being raised to Life again, he is become the Fountain and Source of eternal Life to all Mankind in a future State. As our Life in this World is derived from *Adam*, so our Life in the World to come, is from CHRIST. *Our Life is now bid with CHRIST in God, Coll. iii, 3, As the Life of the Tree in Winter is hid in the Root. As in Adam all die, so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.* CHRIST is the Resurrection and the Life. CHRIST's human Nature being united to the Divine, is that Bread of God which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life to the World.

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John, vi, 33, Hence St. Paul ascribes our Justification and Victory over Death, rather to CHRIST's Resurrection, than to his Death, *Rom. viii, 34. It is CHRIST that died, yea, rather that is risen from the Dead.* Yet, after all, to pretend to explain the Mystery of Redemption, or to pretend to say, from whence the Necessity ariseth of an Atonement for Sin; why without shedding of Blood there can be no Remission of Sin; why no Blood but that most precious Blood of the Son of God can take away Sin, I dare not, because I don't find that it is revealed. And perhaps, the Reason why it is not revealed, is, because we are not at present capable of understanding it. But that the Thing is so, though we cannot say, why it is so, is as certain as Words can make it: Nay, it is the Grand Point in which all the Rays of Revelation, from one End of the Bible to the other, do unite and centre. And, is it not then, very surprising, when Men, who have a great Veneration for the holy Bible, assume, that the Blood of any Martyrs in Kind though not in Degree, is as expiatory for Sin, and doth in the same Manner make an Atonement and Satisfaction for the Transgressions of other Men, as the Blood of CHRIST did? Is this the Language of the holy Scriptures? The Blood of *Abel*, and of all the Martyrs crieth for Vengeance; whilst the Blood of CHRIST crieth for Mercy, and cleanseth from all Sin. Was it in their own Blood, or in the Blood of the Lamb, that the Martyrs washed their Robes and made them white? *Rev. vii, 14. Tho* I do not pretend to understand the Secrets of the Divine Councils, or what Satisfaction for Sin, the essential or governing Justice of God doth require: Yet if I can understand the plainest Declarations concerning our Redemption, which are obvious to the most cursory

curfory Reader, throughout the whole Bible; not all the Worthinefs and Righteoufnefs active and paffive, of every Saint and Martyr, from the Beginning to the End of the World, is fufficient to deliver one fingle Soul from Hell, and advance him to the Glories of God's Kingdom, Pf. xlix, 7, 8. *None of them can by any Means redeem his Brother, nor give to God a Ranfom for him. For the Redemption of their Soul is precious, and it ceafeth forever.*

Indeed, this Author found himfelf under a Necessity to pull down with his own Hands, all that he had built upon this falfe Foundation. For thus, he fays, * *Nor is our Faith and Dependence in Revelation directed to any other Worthinefs,---but that of our bleffed Lord and Saviour Jefus Chrift.* This, in Effect, is to give up the Point: For if Revelation directeth us according to the Truth of Things, there certainly cannot be any other Worthinefs in the Univerfe befides that of our bleffed Redeemer; i. e. none of a fimilar Nature, none of which produceth fimilar Effects; but all Worthinefs and of the moft eminent Saints (tho' for CHRIST's Sake they are well pleafing to God) yet in Point of Merit, and for Dependence of others, they are no better than filthy Rags and broken Reeds.

To hide the Deformity of this monftrous Doctrine of Supererogation, he is obliged to put in a Caveat, viz. † *That it cannot belong to us to fet a Value upon the Obedience and Goodnefs of fuppofed Saints, and then determine how much it fhall redound to the Benefit of ourfelves or others.* But this Cover is too thin; for if it be true, that other good Men have a Worthinefs and Righteoufnefs altogether like CHRIST's, and productive of the fame falutary Effects for other Men, as our LORD's is

is, altho' not in fo high a Degree: Why may we not then, have *some* Dependence on the Merits of thefe Saints; tho' we cannot tell how to fet an *exact* Value on them? Where there is *something* to be had, tho' we are at a Lofs to know juftly how *much* it is, yet furely we may have *some* Expectations and Dependence; tho' not *fo great* as if we knew the exact Sum of their Merits.

And if this Doctrine be found, I fhould be loath to lofe the Comfort and Advantage of it. And tho' fome of their Saints in the *Romifh* Church are *fuppofitious*, yet the Scripture Saints, are Saints indeed, Why then may we not pray to God in their Names, as well as in the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? if this Doctrine be true, why may we not beg God's Mercy by the Worthinefs of St. Peter, or by the Merits and Sufferings of St. Paul? He fays, becaufe GOD hath not appointed it. But ftill the Queftion returneth, If it be true, that many Saints have done and fuffered more than they needed for themfelves, in like Manner as CHRIST did, and if their Obedience and Righteoufnefs, like his availeth others for Pardon and Salvation; why doth not Revelation direct us to look to, and depend in fome Meafure upon their Merits? The only Answer which can with Truth be returned is this: Becaufe there is no fuch Thing in Nature; but it is a mere Fiction and Chimera. Thus, you fee, how one Extreme begetteth another, and Socinianifm finks into Popery.* But, then there is an extreme

* Mr. Taylor carries the Doctrine of Merits and Supererogation, as high as any Romanift whatever, but differeth from fome of them, in denying the Pope's Infallibility, or Skill to fet a Value upon the Surplusage of Merits that remain in the Church Treasury, and his Right to keep the Key, and to grant Indulgences and Pardons upon, or out of this common Stock of Merits. In which Opinion, many, otherwife good Catholics, do concur with him.

extreme on the other Hand, which we must beware of. For while this Author maketh our good Works to be as meritorious in Kind, as CHRIST's: There are some, who will not allow our Repentance and Gospel Obedience to bear any Part at all in our Salvation, no, not as a Condition or necessary Qualification. Whereas, nothing is more evident, than, that tho' CHRIST did fulfil the Law of Perfection for us, and freed us from it's Condemnation: Yet CHRIST himself hath enjoined his own Laws upon us in the Gospel. He hath commanded us to believe in him, to repent, to mortify our Lusts, &c. Which Things CHRIST never performed for us. If by his Grace we perform these Things, through his Merits we shall be finally justified and saved. But if we neglect them, in the Day of Judgment CHRIST's Righteousness will be a useless Plea to prevent our Condemnation. And to reproach this Doctrine, as teaching *Self-righteousness, Salvation by our own Works, and as joining our own Righteousness with CHRIST's, and as falling from Grace to Works*, is VERY UNJUST; for it is only a trusting to CHRIST alone to save us in his own Way; who is the Author of eternal Salvation to them that obey him, and to none else.

Faithfully. One Thing more I desire to Name, because it is much spoken against by the same Set of Divines, that is the everlasting Punishment of those who die impenitent.

They say it would argue *Revenge in God*, and cannot consist with his infinite Goodness, &c.†

I will not abuse your Patience by entering into Particulars. But let me a little inquire. How do we know, but that the vicious Habits contracted in this Life,

Life, may render bad Men utterly incapable of the Happiness of the Next; and that their being excluded out of the Kingdom of Heaven, and left in utter Darkness, may not be the natural Effect and necessary Consequence of their past Wickedness? How know we, that the bad Habits and hellish Tempers-acquired in this World, can be put off and exchanged, when we feel the dreadful Effects of them in the World to come? How do we know, but that the everlasting Flames of Hell are kindled and upheld by the voluntariness of Pravity and Malice of the Damned? How do we know, that if God had informed us, that our Wickedness should expose us to none but temporary Inconveniencies and Evils, that this would have been sufficient to bring Sinners to Repentance; especially, if they knew at the same Time, that they should outlive their Punishments, and enjoy an Eternity of Bliss and Glory?

Though we know that God is infinitely good, yet we may constantly observe in this World, that Persons by neglecting Self-government, and indulging a perverse Humour for a While, may ruin a good Constitution, and deprave their Minds past Recovery: Nay, by one presumptuous Action, may in a Moment undo themselves; so, that even Repentance, tho' ever so sincere, will not retrieve the Mischief. And why Wickedness persisted in, should not have as fatal Effects with Regard to the next World, who can tell?

Who can tell, but that the Sight of the sad and amazing Fruits of Disobedience in the Devils and wicked Men's eternal Misery, may be the Means of preserving innumerable Worlds of intellectual Beings, in their Integrity? Who knoweth, whether the Hell of Devils and bad Men, may bear any greater Proportion

† See *J. Nicoll Scott's Sermons*,

portion to the Rest of God's inconceivably vast Creation, than one small Prison to a great and flourishing Kingdom; in which all the Rest of the Inhabitants are very happy? Who in that Case would reproach the King with Cruelty; when these miserable Prisoners came into it by their own Choice, after sufficient Warning; and would be a Nuisance to the Rest of the Inhabitants, if they were released? Sure I am, that the Scripture Declarations, that the Punishments of the Damned shall be perpetual and endless, are full as clear, as that the Rewards of the Saints shall be so. And it giveth no Intimation, that there shall be any future Probations or Trials after Death. And I would not be he that should encourage Sinners to make the Experiment, for more than the Devil offered our blessed Saviour; For in that Case I should only act the Part which the old Serpent did with *Eve*, who flattered her that God was too good to put his Threatenings into Execution: And said, *Ye shall not surely die*. For the Devil to pretend to more Mercy than God, is no new Thing.

God is good, say some, therefore an everlasting Hell is impossible. And they might as well say, God is good, and therefore there can be no Hell at all; nay, no Evil, no Sin, no Sorrow and Misery in this World. Tho' God maketh no Creature for Misery, yet he certainly hath made Men and Angels such free Agents, and put them in such a Condition, that through their own Perverseness and abuse of their Powers, they may, and many actually do make a wrong Choice, and make themselves miserable. Our LORD, not merely as a Law-giver, but as a Prophet and Teacher declaring Facts and Events, hath said, *Matt. xxv, 46 These shall go away into everlasting Punishment: But the*

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Righteous into Life eternal. Did CHRIST intend that we should regard this Doctrine as a Reality, or only as a Scare-crow? *Numb. xxiii, 19. God is not a Man that he should lie, neither the Son of Man that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? As we judge of other Men's Hearts by our own, and all Men have pretty near the same Affection, so my own Experience teaches me, that Fear is the King of all our Passions, and we have no Appetite so violent, but that strong Fears will check and controul it. And there is nothing that can enter into the Imagination of Man, more dreadful and amazing, than that Fire which shall never be quenched, and that Worm which shall never die.* He therefore, who in any Shape, goes about to abate Sinner's Fears, and to make this Matter doubtful, doth in Proportion weaken the most powerful Argument in Nature to awaken them to Repentance: And whether he knoweth it or not, is the Dupe of Satan to harden unhappy Wretches in their Course to eternal Ruin. It's very true, God is good, infinitely good: But then his Goodness is a holy, wise, and just Goodness. We, short sighted Creatures, are not competent Judges of what it becometh the Wisdom and Goodness of the Governor of the Universe to do. We know too little of his Counsels to determine, what the ruling so many Millions of Millions of intelligent Creatures requireth. It may well satisfy us, that tho' we know not how, yet we shall know hereafter, the Reasons of the divine Dispensations; and being transported with the Contemplation of divine Wisdom and Goodness, we shall join with Angels in that Acknowledgment, *Rev. xvi, 5. Thou art righteous O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.*

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Upon the whole, *Let us earnestly contend for that Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints.* That the eternal Son of God should become Man, and deliver us from Death and all Evil, was that reviving Doctrine, which God of his infinite Pity taught our first Parents, immediately after their Fall: And hath been the strong Consolation of all good Men in every Generation. *Abraham* rejoiced to see CHRIST's Day, he saw it and was glad. *Jacob* went out of the World longing for this *Salvation of GOD.* This was *Job's* Support under his dreadful Calamities, that *he knew that his Redeemer liveth.* With *David* it was *all his Salvation, and all his Desire.* But what need I name Particulars? This was the *Desire of all Nations.* And that with good Reason; for it openeth to our View a most ravishing and transporting Scene; the eternal and only begotten Son of God is become our Brother, Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh. By this Union of God and Man, by this Conjunction of Heaven and Earth, we, Worms of the Dust, are higher advanced, and are become nearer a-kin to the Deity, than any Order of the Angels. By this Pledge we are secured of God's everlasting Love, in Consequence of his Promise and Oath. CHRIST being the Son of God by Nature, we his Brethren thereby become the Sons of God by Adoption; and so Heirs of God, and Co-heirs with CHRIST. God is his Father, and therefore our Father: And *because he liveth, we shall live also.* This stupendous Event is the Admiration of the Angels, and the Envy of the Devils. Therefore have they always been attempting to corrupt and undermine this ineffable Truth, and transcendent *Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh.* But my Brethren, let not

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Satan have the Satisfaction of beguiling and cheating you out of it. If you once let go your Hold, you will become like a Stone rolling down a steep Hill; and perhaps never stop till you settle in Infidelity, Scepticism, or no Principles at all: Which hath been the Case of a great many. Men may know, when they begin to make too free with divine Revelation, by twisting it to what Sense their wanton Humour pleaseth; but God knoweth, where such Arrogancy will end. I must own, I am so far from conceiving a meaner Opinion of the Bible, because I find Mysteries in it, that I look upon them as a strong Proof of it's divine Original; for human Sagacity never could have invented them. And they are all *Mysteries of Godliness*: That is, revealed in such a Manner, as to have the strongest Tendency to make Mankind Godly, righteous, charitable, pure, and in every Respect virtuous, happy and excellent Creatures. Those Expressions are very pertinent to this Case, *Job, xxviii, 28. And unto Man be said, Behold, the Fear of the Lord that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.* God hath limited our Knowledge in this World, and confined it to the Bounds of Practice. He hath revealed the Things of the spiritual World to us, so far, as is sufficient to make us wise unto Salvation: And we can know enough of God, so as to love, fear, and obey him. And that will lay the Foundation for our everlasting Happiness in the next State, which will be a World of Light and Knowledge. And methinks, Men do not shew their Wisdom, but their Weakness, when they attempt to explain the Mysteries of God's Word by Hypotheses of their own Invention, however ingenious: For the Effect always must be, that either they explain them away to nothing,

nothing, as the Socinians have done ; or else after all their Pains, they remain inexplicable still ; for it is not in Man's Power to mend the Word of God.* I shall now conclude with a few Words to you my reverend Brethren, which, it is like, will be the last that I shall ever address to you. I beseech you, for the Glory of the great God, which doth in a special Manner depend upon your Conduct ; for the Honour of our blessed Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath entrusted you with his glorious Gospel, his Authority and his Church, which is the purchase of his own Blood ; for your own eternal Interest, which is nearly connected with that of your People ; and for the Love of your Hearers' Souls, which in a short Time must all be inexplicably happy, or undone to Eternity ; *Take heed unto yourselves, and unto your Doctrine.*

Let us study carefully to acquire and propagate such Ideas and Conceptions of divine Things, as the holy Spirit in the Bible teaches, without any Bias towards human Schemes, whether ancient or modern ; which like *Wood, Hay, and Stubble, will be burnt.* And tho' the Authors and Propagators of them may be saved, so as by Fire, yet will they suffer Loss.

But if you faithfully preach the true Sense of the holy Scripture, which lies open and fair to the View of honest and inquisitive Minds : And if you adorn, this sound Doctrine with an exemplary Life ; if you both teach and do God's Will, your Reward will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. *Yet a little While, and*

* The Athanasian Creed is not an attempt to explain ; but to bring into one View, what in divers Places of holy Writ is revealed concerning the holy Trinity and the Incarnation. Nor is there one Proposition in it, which being considered with common Candour, may not be easily and certainly proved to be true by the Word of God. And even that damnable Sentence meaneth no more, than our Saviour's Words, *Mark, xvi, 16. He that believeth not shall be damned.*

and be that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. And when the great Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls shall appear, he will applaud and reward your Fidelity ; and say, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* O happy End of a Christian Course ! What Applause ! What Shouts and Acclamations of Millions of the heavenly Courtiers will welcome you into your eternal Preferences ! The Riches and Honours of this World are childish Trifles ; nay, the triumphs of the *Roman* Generals after their Victories, and all the Grandeurs of mortal Men, are not to be named with the Magnificence of that blessed Day. The Bliss is too big, too noble and divine, for the Idea of it to enter into the human Mind : All the Languages on Earth do not afford any Words to express it ; and you never can know what true Pleasure Means, until you obtain the *Euge* and Approbation of our eternal Judge.

Foreseeing then, *the Joy set before us*, let us put on the Resolution of blessed Paul, Acts, xx, 24. *I count not my Life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.* With which heavenly Zeal, O HOLY GHOST, inspire all our Hearts, through the Merits of the blessed Mediator, that we may bring forth much Fruit to the Glory of the Father.

A M E N.



APPENDIX.

The Controversy about Creeds and explanatory Articles beginning to obtain in this Country, which may perhaps be attended with ill Effects, it is thought expedient to subjoin the following Extract from Mr. GEORGE HARVEST's Defence of requiring SUBSCRIPTION to Explanatory Articles, against Mr. SAMUEL CHANDLER's Case of Subscription, &c.

WHEN Y Explanatory Articles of Faith, I presume, we both mean the same Thing ; viz. certain Human Explications of the Words of Scripture ; those Words which are supposed to contain The Principles of the Christian Religion ; which Explanations are proposed to be subscribed, or assented to by the Candidates for the Christian Ministry. Let the one be called, for Brevity-sake, *Explanatory Articles* ; the other, *Scripture-Creeds*. At present we will use the Words Assent, and SUBSCRIPTION, *indifferently* ; for the Debate is, not about the Manner of expressing, or giving Assent ; but about the Thing to which Assent or Subscription is required. Your Language, that Subscription is a *Qualification* for Admission into the Christian Ministry, shall be complied with, to avoid Contention about Words ; though, in truth, the Subscription

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tion is not *itself* the *Qualification*, but the *Test*, or *Evidence* of the *Qualification* for the Ministry.---The Case then is as follows : You contend for Subscription to a *Scripture-Creed* only, as such *Qualification* : I, on the contrary, maintain the Reasonableness of Subscription to Explanatory Articles. The Question is, *not* about the Articles of the *Church of England*, or about any other Explanatory Articles in particular ; but it is, in *general*, concerning *Explanatory Articles, as Explanatory*. Thus stands the Question.

Now, to be decisive, I will not put the Debate with you upon the Foot of *Expediency*, or *Inexpediency*, of your, or my, Method of framing Articles for Subscribers : The Question shall not be, which Method, that of *Explanatory Articles*, or of a *Scripture-Creed*, is preferable ? But I will try the Point with you, upon the Foot of *Necessity* ; and, if I shew that 'tis *necessary*, indispensably necessary, that Candidates for the Ministry should subscribe to *Explanatory Articles*, there will be an End of the Question ; for such *Necessity* does at once put an End to all Disputes about *Expediency* and *Inexpediency*.

First then, Sir, you allow that 'tis necessary there should be *Pastors* or *Teachers* in the *Church of Christ*, to instruct the People in the *Christian Faith* : That they, whose Office it is to instruct others in the Christian Faith, must *themselves* hold the Christian Faith : That, therefore, the *Pastors*, or *Teachers*, of the Christian Faith, must be *duly qualified* for such their Office, by their holding the *Christian Faith*. i. e. the Faith of the Gospel : That, therefore, certain Persons must have a Right, or be appointed to judge, to examine and determine, concerning the *Qualification*, the *Fitness* of those who are Candidates for the Christian Ministry : That the

Rule

Rule of their Judgment, or Determination concerning such *Qualification* of Teachers, is the holy Scripture,-- Thus far, I think, we are both agreed; at least, I see no Reason why it may be supposed you should deny any of these Propositions. Indeed, as to the two Propositions, the *Quaker* will deny the former, and the *Papist* or *Roman Catholic* the latter; but I am sure that the Practice of all Protestant Churches (as they are usually called) will justify my laying down these Principles, as *Posulata*, or common Principles in this Debate.

Well then, the *Holy Scripture* is the *Rule*, by which the Persons, who are to examine the Candidates for the Christian Ministry, are to be guided, in order to determine whether they be *qualified*, or not *qualified*, for Admission to it.---Now, I doubt, we are going to differ: You think 'tis sufficient to answer the End of Examination (which is, that they who are to teach the Truths of the Gospel, should be duly *qualified* for their Office, by their *Belief* of the Truths of the Gospel,) if a *Scripture-Creed*, i. e. a Formulary consisting of the Words of Scripture, *without any Explanation*, containing the *Principles*, and perhaps some *Doctrines* of Christianity, be subscribed by the Candidates. On the contrary, I assert the *Necessity* of Subscription to *Explanatory Articles*: And my Reason for asserting the *Necessity* of this Subscription, is drawn from the *absolute Insufficiency* of the other Method proposed, for the Examination of Candidates for the Christian Ministry, *viz.* that of subscribing to the *Scripture-Creed* only, to answer the End of Subscription; which is, that the Ministers, the Teachers of the Gospel do themselves hold the *Faith* of the Gospel.

'Tis scarce worth while to take notice, that though I every-where speak of the *Qualification* of Candidates for

for the Ministry, which is their Belief of the Truths of the Gospel, I do not mean that *That* is the *only Qualification* for the Ministry: No, surely; Morals and Learning are also required in this Case. But these have nothing to do in the present Question. We are talking about the *Qualification* of FAITH, to which *Articles* and *Subscription* are relative, and not about the other Qualifications of Morals and Learning; about which (except indeed with the *senseless Elect*, whose *Morals* need not to be inquired into; the *gifted Brethren*, who look upon *Letter-Learning* as *carnal* and *unprofitable*) there can be no Dispute.

To shew then, as plainly as possible, the *Insufficiency* of Subscription to the *Scripture-Creed* only, I would lay down the following Observations.

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I. The *Faith* of the Gospel is that *one Sense* of the *Words* of the *Scripture* which was affixed to them, or intended by the sacred Writers.

II. The *Words* of *Scripture* having been used or taken in several different *Senses* and *Interpretations*; it is thereby become *ambiguous* and *indeterminate*, what Sense any Person affixes to the Words of Scripture.

III. An Assent, or Subscription, therefore, to the *Words* of *Scripture*, or to a *Scripture-Creed* only, can be no *Proof*, *Test*, or *Evidence* of any Person's holding the *Faith* of the Gospel.

First, The Faith of the Gospel is that *one Sense* of the *Words* of *Scripture*, which was affixed to them, or intended, by the sacred Writers.

This is self-evident. The sense of Scripture can be but

but *one*, and that one sense can undoubtedly be that only, which was *intended* by the sacred Writers. *How* we are to judge, and to determine *what* this Sense is, is *another* Question, to be considered hereafter.

Secondly, The *Words of Scripture* having been used or taken in several *different* Senses and Interpretations; it is thereby become *ambiguous* and *indeterminate*, *what* Sense any Person affixes to the Words of Scripture.

'Tis extremely difficult to guard sufficiently against being misunderstood, or misrepresented, by those who cannot, or will not, understand a plain Distinction. But, to express myself as clearly as possible upon this Head, my Meaning is This; that Words being used in *different* Senses, by different Persons, is the Foundation of *Ambiguity*; and therefore, the Words being used by one Person in one Sense, by another Person in another Sense; it will be *doubtful*, *uncertain*, or *ambiguous*, *what particular* Sense any Person affixes to them, or *how* He understands them, till he has *explained* and *declared*, *what* Sense it is that he does affix to them. When different Persons affix different Meanings to the *same* Words, then these Words become, in Language or Discourse, so far *ambiguous*, or *indeterminate*. Neither you, nor I can know how others understand them, without *Explanation*. As to the Thing itself, that the Words of Scripture are thus differently understood by different Persons, 'tis Fact, and undeniable: And 'tis equally certain, that it cannot be known from the Use of the Scripture-Words only, what it is that any one means by them; and that therefore Explanation is become necessary.

Take this Proposition, for Instance, *The Word was God*: Can I tell merely from another Person's repeating these Words to me, what he *means* by them? Is he

he an *Atbanasian*? Is he a *Sabellian*? Is he an *Arian*? or, a *Socinian*? In a Word, does he mean *Something* by it; or, does he mean *nothing*; for there is plainly as great, the same infinite Difference, between what the one means, and what the other means, in this Case, as there is between *necessary Existence*, and *not being*. How is it possible that I should know what you *mean*, what *Sense* you affix to this Proposition, unless you *explain* it to me, since the Words are used in many different Senses?

Again; *This is my Body*: The *absolute* Meaning of this Proposition is *plain* to me. 'Tis, to me, just as plain that these Words are *not* to be understood *literally*, as it is that Christ's Crucifixion is not to be understood *figuratively*. Yet, is not this very Proposition, in *some respect*, *ambiguous*? i.e. Is it *plain* and *certain* what another Man means by it? Do all mean the same Thing by the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*? If I ask a *Papist*, or a *Roman-Catholic*, the Doctrine is *Transubstantiation*, and a *real Sacrifice*: Is a *Lutheran*, *Consubstantiation*, or *Impanation*. If another, *Real Presence*: A Fourth tells me of an *unbloody Sacrifice*; a Fifth, of *Spiritual Privileges* annexed to the receiving the Elements of Bread and Wine. The next gives me what he calls a "Plain Account of the Lord's " Supper," which, indeed understood, as I would willingly understand his Meaning, is not, perhaps, justly exceptionable: Another frankly declares, with all Plainness of Speech and Simplicity, that he really means nothing more by the *Communion of the Body, and Blood of Christ*, than the *true Spiritual Communion* of Christians, in mutual Love and Charity. Now, Sir, say, I beseech you, How can I possibly discover the Meaning of *any One* of these Persons, merely from his telling

ling me, that he believes the Truth of our Lord's Word's when he says, *This is my Body*? Or, is it not ambiguous, what he means by those Scripture-Words?

Once more----Christ came into the World to save Sinners. He saves Sinners, says the *Papist*, or the *Roman Catholic*, not only by his Doctrine and Example, and the Merit of his Sufferings; but by purchasing, by his own Blood, an *Infallible Church*; by joining with; or being added to which, Men are saved.----Christ saves Sinners, says the *Supralapsarian*, by making the indispensable, necessary, infinite Satisfaction to infinite Justice.---He saves Sinners by making full Satisfaction to the Divine Justice, so that nothing remains on our Part, but *true justifying Faith*, which is of *Course* attended with, or is *productive* of Obedience. So says the *Antinomian*, or *Solifidian*. Another says (and says rightly) That Christ saves Sinners by the Morality of his Gospel, Repentance, Obedience, and Perfection; by leaving Men a complete Example of all Virtue and Holiness in his own spotless Life; by enforcing the Practice of his Laws by the Sanctions of eternal Rewards and Punishments; and by enabling all those who are *willing to do his Will*, with the Grace and Assistance of his Holy Spirit; but, *principally* by suffering upon the Cross a *proper vicarious Punishment*, and being an *expiatory Sacrifice* for the Sins of the whole World; the great Method of Reconciliation between God and Man, *freely appointed* by the *original essential Goodness* of the Father.---But if you inquire of a *Christian-Deist* (one who will readily subscribe to a *Scripture-Creed*;) whether, or not, he believes, that Christ came into the World to save Sinners, he will reply, undoubtedly he did; and for that End, he preached very excellent *Morality*, and withal gave an Instance

Instance of the Practicableness of it in his own Life, beyond any *other Moralist*, or Prophet; and that he died in Confirmation of the Truth of it. As for any *proper Sacrifice* in the Death of Christ, that Notion, it seems, took its Rise from some Passages in Scripture, where the Apostles, (St. PAUL in particular, whose manner it was to become all Things to all Men) are speaking in Accommodation to the gross Notions and Prejudices of the *unmetaphysical Jew*; but we, who understand the Nature and Reason of Things, have not so learned the Apostles: Thus the *Sacrian*.---Now is it not *ambiguous*, what any Person means by these Scripture-Words, *Christ came into the World to save Sinners*? Are they not understood in several different Senses? And is there not therefore a Necessity for Explanation?

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The Conclusion is, that it being thus *ambiguous* and *indeterminate*, what Sense any Person affixes to the Words of Scripture, amidst the several different Senses and Interpretations; therefore some Explanation is necessary to be assented to, or subscribed by those who are Candidates for the Christian Ministry, as a Test of their Qualification for the Office of the Ministry; which Qualification is their holding the Faith of the Gospel.

If Mr. Chandler now ask that Question of Questions, *Who shall judge?* who shall judge and determine what is the Faith of the Gospel? Which it is, of the various, and perhaps contradictory Senses and Interpretations that Men have put upon the Words of Scripture, that is the True Sense? I answer, that, in the present Case, where the believing the Doctrines, or holding the Faith of the Gospel, is a Qualification for the Office of the Ministry; undoubtedly, those Persons whose Right it is, or who are delegated, or appointed by others,

others, to examine and determine concerning the *Qualification* of Candidates for the Ministry, who are qualified, and who not; They must judge *what is that Qualification*, which is the *Rule* by which these judgments are to be directed. But that *Qualification*, as before observed, is the Believing the *Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, the *Faith* of the Gospel. Who then, in the Name of Common Sense, must judge what are the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ? or, *what is the Faith* of the Gospel, but *They* who are to judge of the Qualification of others for the Ministry? Nothing is more evident. If I am to judge of *your Qualification* for the Ministry; if such Qualification be your Belief of the Truths of the Gospel; and, if it be *ambiguous, what are the Truths* of the Gospel; what is the *true Sense* of Scripture Texts relating to any Doctrine; *who*, I pray, is to determine, in this Case, what is the Doctrine of Scripture, *You*, or *I*? If *You* are, 'tis a flat Contradiction to the Supposition that *I* am to judge. Certainly, if *I* am to judge, whether *you* are qualified for the Ministry, or not; *I* must be determined, not by *your* Opinion, but by *my own*. The Right of *private Judgment* stands just where it did, and is not in the least affected by these Considerations. Private Judgment is *supported* on all Sides. The Candidate has judged for himself, what is the true Sense of Scripture; and the Examiner is to judge for himself, whether the Candidate be *qualified* or not. Every Man's Judgment must be, *to him, the True Judgment*, the *Truth of the Case*; nor can it be otherwise without a Contradiction; For, if you think your Own Judgment, or Opinion, *not to be true or right*; 'tis plainly, *not your Judgment*, or Opinion, but what you perceive to be *Error*. Whatever a Man judges to be the *true Sense* and

and Meaning of Scripture, *that is*, and must be, *to him, the Doctrine* of Scripture, the *Faith of the Gospel*; and consequently, whosoever holds or maintains *another sense*, cannot but appear *to him, not to hold the Faith of the Gospel*. Indeed, not being *infallible*, he cannot *absolutely affirm*, as a certain Truth, that whosoever differs from him, does *not* hold the Christian Faith; but yet he cannot but *think*, and *judge*, and be of *Opinion*, that he does not; and therefore, if a Candidate for the Ministry give an Explication of the Words of Scripture, an Account of the Truths of the Gospel, as his Faith, which the Person who is Judge of his Qualification for the Ministry, thinks to be *erroneous*; he cannot consistently admit him, *as qualified*, to the Office of the Ministry. Therefore, *whatsoever Sense of Scripture* appears, to those who are to judge of the Qualification of Candidates for the Ministry, to be the *true Sense* of Scripture; *That must be Their Rule* in judging of such *Qualification*.

I have purposely omitted to take notice of that wild Scheme of Subscription, *viz. Subscription to the Scripture, as the Word of God*; the beloved Project of the Friends of an *unlimited Comprehension*. Because, 'tis indeed the same Thing in Effect and Consequence, with the Subscription to a *Scriptural-Creed*. In shewing, therefore, the Vanity of one Scheme, I expose both. 'Tis evident, that all who will subscribe to the *Scripture-Creed*, will subscribe as readily to Scripture *as the Word of God*; and, equally, that all who will subscribe to Scripture as the Word of God, will subscribe to the *Scripture-Creed*; supposing always that they mean *the same Thing by Scripture*, and hold the *same Writings to be authentic*; and that the only Difference between these two Sorts of Subscribers, is, that

✂

[Archives copy is incomplete.]

One



WESTERN VIEW OF "POQUETANNOCK," PRESTON.

The church, built soon after 1734, is seen at the extreme right of the picture.



A SERMON, Preached at the OPENING of TRINITY-CHURCH, LE FORT.



CHRIST CHURCH, STRATFORD.
Second Building, 1744.



TRINITY CHURCH, NEW HAVEN.
First Building, 1752.

T H E
S A N C T I T Y
O F A
C H R I S T I A N T E M P L E ;

Illustrated in a

S E R M O N,

At the O P E N I N G

T R I N I T Y - C H U R C H, in *Pomfret,*

On *Friday, April 12, 1771.*

By *JOHN TYLER, A.M.*
MISSIONARY from the venerable *Society for the*
Propagation of the Gospel, at NORWICH, in
C O N N E C T I C U T.

Reverence my Sanctuary: I am the Lord.
O come, let us worship, and bow down: let us kneel before the
Lord, our Maker.
With one Mind, and one Mouth, glorify God,
Glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's.
J E R O V A H.
K. DAVID.
S C. PAUL.



P R O V I D E N C E: Printed by JOHN CARTER,
at *Shakespear's Head.* M,DCC,LXI.

T O
Simon Pease, Esq;
O F N E W P O R T, R H O D E - I S L A N D.

S I R,

T H E laudable and pious activity you have shown, among the many and very worthy benefactors at Newport, by whose generous assistance the Church at Pomfret was principally erected, has induced me to offer this discourse to your acceptance, in compliance with the desires of the members of it, as a monument of their sincere thanks to you and them, and an acknowledgment of their gratitude for that noble piety and zeal for goodness, which, from your first appearance among men, have ever been visibly predominant in you, and eminently conspicuous in promoting the building of their edifice, to the honour of God, and their very great comfort and relief.

They

DEDICATION.

They also acknowledge their obligations for the few helps they have received elsewhere; and promise that nothing, on their parts, shall be wanting to afford the most convincing proofs, by their earnest and devout attachments to religion, that their pious contributions have not been ill-placed.

I now beg of Almighty GOD, that he may be pleased to make this Church effectual to his own honour and service; and to bless you, and all its other promoters, in the practice and continuance of all virtuous excellencies in this world, until ye may all finally receive your never-ending reward in that which is to come.

I have the honour to be, with very great esteem and respect,

Sir, your most obedient,

And very humble Servant,

JOHN TYLER.

Norwich, Dec. 1771.

THE

SANCTITY of a Christian Temple.

2d CHRONICLES vi. 40, 41.

Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine Eyes be open, and let thine Ears be attent unto the Prayer that is made in this Place.

Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting Place, thou, and the Ark of thy Strength: Let thy Priests, O Lord God, be clothed with Salvation, and let thy Saints rejoice in Goodness.

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THIS house being built to the honour of God's holy name, with much unanimity and dispatch, through the favour of divine providence; and it being, from this time forward, to be devoted, set apart and dedicated, to the more solemn, public and immediate worship and service of the one supreme Lord of the universe, was the reason of my choosing these words of the wife King Solomon (uttered on a like occasion) for your consideration at this time.—My text is a part of that solemn and excellent prayer, which the wife man offered up to his maker, when he consecrated to his sacred service an elegant and beautiful edifice, even that rich and magnificent Temple, which he had erected to that noble purpose. And although the workmanship and ornamental glory of the house, in which we are now assembled, are incomparably beneath those of Solomon's Temple; yet the words under consideration, may be as properly used at the dedication

A DEDICATION SERMON.

tion of this House, as they were at the consecration of that Temple. For the presence of God is as necessary in this Sanctuary, as in that of Solomon: You as really need God's favourable attention to your prayers offered in this Church, as the Israelites did in their Temple. And if you *worship in spirit and in truth*, with sincere devotion and hearty affection; the God of heaven will as mercifully hear, and answer with as bountiful a blessing, those prayers you offer in this Church; and as readily afford you his gracious presence and acceptance in this House, as he did the Israelites in that splendid Temple, which was adorned with all the wealth and art of a potent empire. For, under the Christian oeconomy, *Wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there will he be in the midst of them.* And notwithstanding *heaven, and the beaven of heavens, cannot contain God;* yet he will afford his presence to the faithful, in those Houses which are built for his honour, and devoted to his sacred worship and service. For, *thus saith the Lord, and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, saith the royal Psalmist. So that, although the magnificence of this House will not compare with that of Solomon's Temple; yet if you are properly qualified for the divine favour, and in these courts offer up unfeigned, pure and holy worship, God will in a peculiar and glorious manner be present with a blessing. And since the occasion of our being now assembled together, is similar to that upon which the words of my text were first used; let us consider them, and attend

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attend to the peculiar instruction which they are proper to afford.

Solomon entreateth the Lord God, that in case his people, for their sins, should be distressed by their *enemies—by drought—by dearth—pestilence—blasting—mildew—locusts—caterpillars—or any kind of sickness,* and should repent and pray to God, in or toward that house, he would hear and except their prayer, forgive their sin, and deliver them out of their calamity. And then, the wise King, drawing towards a conclusion, desires that God would be ready to hear, and graciously answer, all the faithful prayers, which should be offered up in that House upon any occasion whatsoever: *Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.* And then he requests of God to accept of that House for his Sanctuary; his resting place, where he might at all times be graciously present: That he would direct and bless the endeavours of the priesthood for the good of the people; and grant his faithful worshippers great occasion to rejoice in his mercy, favour and protection: *Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place; thou, and the ark of thy strength: Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.*

This text is one remarkable instance of the religious custom among God's people, in former ages, of setting apart, and dedicating Houses to the solemn worship of their maker. This custom, among the Jews, was under the direction and approbation of God: And performed by Solomon, with the immediate assistance of the divine spirit. And this has been almost the universal custom of Christians, ever since

since they have been suffered to erect decent houses of worship. Hence we may infer from the text, I. That God affords his more peculiar preference to those Houses which are devoted to his sacred worship; and hath a greater regard for them than for other places.

II. That God is treated with greater respect, honour and reverence, by the public worship of his people; and will more graciously hear and answer their grateful praises, and sincere prayers, when offered up in his Sanctuary, than elsewhere. And,

III. The respect which is due from you to this House, considered as the Temple of God; and how you ought always to behave when you tread the courts of the Lord's House.

First, then, we learn that God affords his more peculiar preference in those Houses which are devoted to his sacred worship; and hath a greater regard for them than for other places. *Arise, O Lord God, in to thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength.*

That allwise providence of the supreme Lord of nature, which surveys, and constantly presides over the whole universe, doth nevertheless fix its peculiar attention upon some particular places *. *God hath loved the gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob; saith the Psalmist. Again, the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.* And accordingly, in the first ages of the Church, to have places set apart for religious worship, was the care of divine providence. The Patriarch Jacob was admonished from heaven to build an altar to the Lord, in that place where he had before appeared to him in a dream, where the Patriarch had

* *Vide South in exodum.*

set up a stone for a pillar, and vowed, that if God would be with him,—that stone should be God's house:—This, said he, is the gate of heaven.—How particular were the directions which God gave to Moses concerning the Tabernacle! And how exact was he about the Temple! Though David was a *man after God's own heart*, and had made a prodigious preparation of materials, yet, because he had shed blood, though it was the blood of the open enemies of the true God, he was not suffered so much as to lay the foundation of that sacred building: But the whole glory of the work devolved upon Solomon; whose heavenly wisdom, shining forth in a blessed time of uninterrupted peace and plenty, rendered him a more pleasing and unexceptionable instrument for so noble a purpose.

Again, when the Temple, for the sins of the people, was levelled with the ground, by an Assyrian army, yet, after the chastisement of a long captivity had fitted the Jews for the precious enjoyment of God's peculiar preference among them again, how wonderfully did God influence the heart of Cyrus, though a heathen Prince, to set forward the building of another Temple! And was not that shining miraculous cloud, which was often seen in and over the Tabernacle and Temple, called, by the Jews, *Shekina*, or majestic divine preference?—Was not this, I say, a most sensible and wonderful token of God's peculiar regard for, and special preference in that House, which was devoted wholly to his solemn worship?

Neither the horrible schism and rebellion of Corah, and his company, nor the sudden and awful vengeance of heaven upon them, could defecate or unhallow their censers, because they had been devoted to the service of God. *Said the Lord to Moses, the censers*

scorners of those sinners against their own souls, let them make broad plates for a covering of the altar; for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are swallowed. And the case is just the same with respect to places which are consecrated to the worship of God.

Again, that God is peculiarly present in, and hath a greater regard for Houses and other things which are devoted to his service, than for those which are not, appears by the exemplary vengeance of God, executed upon the profaners and impious violators of them.

Sacrilegious depredations have ever been attended by the secret curse of God, and the invisible vengeance of heaven *. This kind of wickedness hath consumed the families of Princes, demolished thrones, and laid whole kingdoms waste. When the Philistines routed the armies of Israel, and took from them the ark of God, what a dreadful curse was it to them, like a devouring plague in their very bowels!—The vengeance of heaven struck Uzzah dead in a moment, for touching the ark; because, though he was zealous for its preservation, yet he had no right to meddle with it. When God delivered the law to Moses at Sinai, any beast that touched the mountain, was to be struck through with a dart, and to fall a sacrifice for a crime, which it was utterly unconscious of. We read that in the reign of Rehoboam, King of Judah, Shishak, King of Egypt, came up to Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of Solomon's Temple, even those utensils which had been devoted to sacred use: And we are told by Josephus what happened to him, after this sacrilegious robbery.—When he returned to Egypt, great mischiefs befel his family; he burnt to death two of his chil-

* *Ps. c South in sundown.*

children; his brother conspired against him; and his son, who next possessed the throne, was struck blind. Afterwards the great Nebuchadnezzar robbed God's Temple: And we also read what judgments followed his sacrilege.—For being puffed up with his own greatness, and what he had done, we are told that his kingdom was taken from him; and he himself, by a judgment before unheard of, driven from human society, and made to feed on grass with the beasts of the field; his impiety rendering him more proper to associate with brutes, than with those who were capable of religion.—And when his son Belshazzar became King, at an impious feast, he sent for the sacred vessels, which had been taken from God's Temple in Jerusalem, and made use of them to drink out of, in derision of their being devoted to the religious service of the God of Israel: And while he was profaning and polluting them with his sensuality, he saw part of an hand upon the wall of his apartment in the palace, and the fingers writing his doom there in legible characters, viz. *God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.—Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.—Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.* And the prophet Daniel, immediately before he interpreted the sentence, told him what this judgment was for: He declared to him, that though he knew the impiety of his father, yet he had *not bumbled his heart; but thou hast lifted up thyself*, said the prophet, *against the Lord of heaven, and they have brought the vessels of his House before thee, and thou and thy Lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them.—* And we are informed that the sentence was speedily executed upon him; for that very night, Cyrus with his army broke into the city of Babylon, and took from

from Belshazzar both his kingdom and his life. And many other remarkable instances of the execution of divine vengeance, upon the profaners, and sacrilegious violators of those things which were sacred to God, under the Jewish economy, might be produced.

Under the Christian dispensation also, history abounds with accounts of the same thing. "There is nothing (says an ingenious *author) that the united voice of all history proclaims so loud, as the certain unfailling curse, that hath pursued and overtaken sacrilege." All this shows that God hath a peculiar regard for Houses, and other things, that are religiously devoted to his worship and service.

I will now just mention some of the reasons why God affords his more peculiar preference in those Houses which are devoted to his sacred worship, and hath a greater regard for them, than for other places.

One reason is, ‡ that God esteems himself peculiarly honoured by his people, when they pay him that respectful reverence, which the meeting together of considerable numbers in one place, and uniting in religious homage, doth express. And therefore he is pleased to be more peculiarly present among them at such times.

Another reason is, that in Houses wholly devoted to the worship of God, the minds of men, being in some measure separated from all worldly objects, and removed from their temporal concerns, are less subject to be diverted from devotion.

Another reason is, that Houses devoted to God, and used only in his service, do naturally inspire the minds of men with reverence for God and religion: which

* Dr. South.
† *Vide Johanson is sundem.*

which tends to fit them for the divine presence and blessing.

Another reason why God so peculiarly regards his House, as commonly to punish the profaners and violators of it with exemplary vengeance, is because that such proceedings tend to the disrepute of religion, and are a daring insult upon the majesty of the invisible God: For assaulting a man's house, is insulting his person.

The last reason I shall mention (and that not the least of them) why God manifests a * particular regard for Houses and other things which are devoted to his service, is because they are peculiarly his property. There is no holiness in these things, considered in themselves, that occasions his regard for them; not even the most holy place in Solomon's Temple had inherently any more sanctity than any other place; but it was relatively holy, being in a peculiar manner God's property. Not but that God is the absolute proprietor of all things; yet nevertheless those things, which men have no right to use, except in his immediate service, may be peculiarly called his property; while he hath granted to them the free use of all other things which come in their way, for their temporal comfort and support.

These things are peculiarly the property of God, which he hath chosen, and set apart for his own use and service. *Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, said God to Adam; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat.*—Thus also God chose the gates of Sion, and the tribe of Levi.

That is likewise the peculiar property of God, which men set apart and devote to his immediate

* *Vide South.*

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service. In this case, men give, or more properly return, as an offering to God, that which he hath first given to them. They relinquish, quit and deliver up to God, all their right or liberty to use those things as their own property, as for any worldly purpose, which God hath freely granted to them, for their own secular use. Upon which donation or dedication, the property of the things given, and the use of them, are alienated and absolutely changed: So that men have no manner of right to the use of them, except in that immediate service of God, to which they were appropriated. And God will endure no rival or competitor in them: But the man who profanes, invades or violates them, is guilty of a sacrilegious usurpation; for which the vengeance of heaven is armed against him, and the curse of God will consume him. Man's giving up, and devoting to the immediate service of God, Houses, or other things, is now, under the Christian œconomy, the foundation of his peculiar property in them.

That man who takes upon him the office of a priest in Christ's Church, doth so give himself up to God and to his service, that he hath no more right to dispose of himself to any other employment, than he hath to command the service of one who is superior to, and absolutely independent of him. And Houses given up to God, and devoted to his immediate service, are peculiarly his property. And men have no more right to appropriate them to any other use, than they have to dispose of other mens estates: Nay, the crime is, almost beyond comparison, greater and more aggravated, because it is sacrilege—an hostile robbery, perpetrated against the supreme ruler of the universe, who is an infinite benefactor, in

in open contempt of his authority, and the instituted means of his grace.

And considering with what bold and undaunted confidence men are sometimes apt to invade the property of an invisible, though almighty avenger, a religious and public dedication of Houses to the sacred worship and service of God, as it doth impress a more sensible respect and reverence, a deeper awe and veneration upon the minds of the people, is certainly a matter of no small importance.

And for dedicating Houses to the public worship of God, and imploring his presence and favourable acceptance of the prayers and praises offered up in them, we have the express warrant of scripture; particularly in the account of Solomon's dedicating the Temple: *For when Solomon had made an end of praying (as a testimony of divine approbation) the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the House.*

Now, some of the reasons (besides those already mentioned) why God hath required, and is more especially pleased with public worship, are these; * that as we are made social beings, and are sensibly affected by each other, so we are commonly more zealously affected with what we transact in society and fellowship one with another.—Again, as we all enjoy the same common blessings, both temporal and spiritual; so these enjoyments do most certainly demand a common and social return of praise. And as we all, in general, have the same necessities; so for the attainment of what we all equally need, it is, in all reason, most fitting we should make our joint addresses and supplications to God. And as public wor-

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* *Vide Johnson in eundem.*

worship is our most reasonable service, and is expressive of peculiar respect and veneration; so nothing on earth is more beautiful and amiable, than an assembly of rational creatures, joining together with one heart, and one voice, in offering up their grateful homage to their supreme Lord and benefactor; as St. John, in the Revelations, represents the worship of heaven, performed in the most perfect manner, before the throne of God.—Such social and public worship tends to knit our hearts together in Christian love and unity.

On such accounts as these, God doth require, and is, in an especial manner, pleased with the public and united worship of his creatures: And this is what occasioned holy David to say, that *one day spent in the House of God, was better than a thousand elsewhere.*—Indeed that our Maker is to be worshipped publicly,—that the more solemn, general and unanimous, our adorations and acknowledgments of him are, the more are they for his honour, and the more becoming our duty; is not only the voice of revelation, but even of nature and reason: Which appears by the universal consent of mankind, in every age and nation; so that there never have been any communities of men, who did not cultivate some kind of public religious worship. And from the earliest ages of Christianity, it hath ever been the practice of its professors (as appears from their constantly meeting on the first day of the week, to break bread) unanimously to join, in devoting themselves to God, in his solemn worship and service. Accordingly St. Paul exhorts Christians, *not to forsake the assembling of themselves together.*—And we read that the Apostles *listed up their voice to God with one accord*; and our Church is so happy as to follow their excellent example. St.

Paul exhorts us, *with one mind, and one mouth, to glorify God.*

But then public worship requires some particular place for the performance of it. Private devotions may be performed in any place; though some are more convenient than others. We read that God is *about our path, and about our bed*: And the more solitary the place, the better we may perform such addresses. But public worship demands a decent House, a convenient reception for numbers to resort to, at stated times; a building set apart and distinguished from common use, to which we may resort from the world and its cares. And such Houses being given up by us, as an offering to God, and devoted to his immediate service, ought to be as commodious, elegant, and magnificent, as our abilities will admit of.

But if any are inclined to blame the custom of the professors of the Church of England, for expensively adorning their Houses of public worship, where they are able, I would ask them, whether being sparing in our offerings to God, doth not manifest, in us, as ungrateful, for did narrowness of soul, and as great disrespect to our Maker, as was shown by those *Jews of old, who offered up for sacrifice the blind and the lame*, whose offerings God abhorred? And is not a liberal offering to God, an indication of respect to him, and regard for the honour of religion? Did God, who changeth not, ever disapprove of the prodigious magnificence, and costly ornaments of Solomon's Temple? And did he not, by the mouth of his prophet Haggai, severely reprove his people for their sparing contributions to the second Temple? *Is it time (said he) for you, O ye, to dwell in your ciled houses, and this House lie waste? Build the House, and I will*

I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

That the House of God should be at least com-
modious, decent, clean, and comely, is what we
might reasonably expect every one would approve of,
who pretends to any reverence for God or religion.
Saith the pious and worthy Dean Stanhope, "Far
"from us be all ornaments, misbecoming the worship
"of a spirit, or the gravity of a Church. But
"sure it hath a very ill aspect, for men to be content-
"edly and sordidly frugal, and to think *that* well
"enough in God's House, which they would not en-
"dure, even in the meanest apartments of their own.
"Religion should not be dressed in the habit of a
"wanton; but do not deny her that of a matron.—
"Let her be modest in her garb; but withal comely
"and clean; and allow her enough, not only to pro-
"tect her from shame and contempt, but to draw
"some respect too. If some have injured her by a
"false and too artificial beauty, this is no reason why
"we should think it a virtue, to turn pious clowns
"and slovens, by running into the contrary extreme,
"and," instead of *worshipping the Lord in the beauty*
"of *holiness*, address him "in the dirt and deformity"
of slovenliness. If we are contented with meannefs
and ugliness in the House of God, and being able,
are however penuriously unwilling to provide what is
honourable for his worship, though it be under pre-
tence of regarding only *spiritual worship*, *heart wor-*
ship, and the like; yet do we not tempt, nay, even
provoke mankind to distrust and ridicule our profes-
sions of piety, and to despise the service of God?
And do we not also incur the peculiar indignation of
heaven? *If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil?*
And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer
it

it now saith Governor, will be be pleased with thee, or
accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. If we are
willing to enjoy the best of every thing ourselves, and
think any thing good enough for God's service, we
may call him *Father, Lord, or Master*, or what we
please; yet these sentiments and proceedings are plain
indications, that he is not the supreme object of our
love and reverence.

In the next place, as no reason can be given, why
God should not be as graciously present in each House,
that we now dedicate to his worship, as he was in the
one Jewish Temple; so these words of the Lord, ut-
tered by the Prophet Isaiah (among many other testi-
monies of scripture) seem fully to evince it: *My*
House shall be called the House of prayer for ALL peo-
ple. By which the introduction of the Gentiles into
the Church of God, is plainly foretold; and that
whatsoever House they should devote to his service,
and assemble in for worship, should be called God's
House of prayer, as the Jewish Temple was. And
agreeable to this, St. Paul wrote to Timothy, who
was then at Ephesus, *bidding, said he, to come unto*
thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know
how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God,
which is the Church of the living God. These words
of the Apostle are a sufficient explanation of those
recorded by the Prophet Isaiah, which were just now
mentioned.

Accordingly it is the custom of the Church of
England, when Houses are built and resigned up to
God for the purposes of his worship, to assemble in
them, and to join, with one accord, in public
prayers and praises; to have sermons preached suit-
able to those occasions, in which public declarations
are made, that those Houses are devoted to God,—
de-

dedicated to his religious worship and service, and from that time forward are to be esteemed sacred to God and religion. The peculiar presence of God is invoked, and his favourable attention to, and especial blessing upon those persons, who shall faithfully seek him in those places. This tends to make such places venerable in the eyes of men, and to draw down a divine blessing on worshipping assemblies.

If any should be inclined to cavil, and say, notwithstanding what hath been offered, that such formal dedications are either needless or superstitious; I would recommend to their consideration, the grand solemnity of dedicating Solomon's Temple, and the miraculous testimony of divine approbation, consequent thereupon. And why are such dedications less proper now? * Eusebius (the first Christian historian, after the Apostles) mentions the dedication of Churches, as generally practised by the primitive Christians. He tells us the particular manner in which this ceremony was performed, and styles it a custom of the Church becoming God. In a word, all nations who have retained any venerable sentiments of God and religion (whether Christians, Jews, or even heathens) have ever practised solemn, formal dedications, when they set apart Houses for religious worship and service.

But though, after our Churches are dedicated, we attribute no inherent holiness to them, but only relative, as being set apart from worldly uses, and devoted wholly to religious purposes, yet some are apt to accuse us of having a superstitious regard for the Houses themselves. Are they not wood and stone, say they, as well as other buildings? I answer; this cavil is the language of that recent kind of refin-

* Vide South in *endum*.

ed and spiritualized piety, to which Jesus Christ and his Apostles were utter strangers. Our Lord had such zeal for the honour of God's House, that he himself drove out of it the buyers, sellers, and other invaders of it. And St. Paul reproved the Corinthians, for profanely eating or feasting in their Churches. *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye the Church of God?* said he.—I have now done with the first general head of discourse, and proceed to show,

II. That God is treated with greater respect, honour and reverence, by the public worship of his people; and will more graciously hear and answer their grateful praises and sincere prayers, when offered up in his Sanctuary, than elsewhere. *Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place,* said Solomon, when he dedicated the Temple. And soon after God answered him, saying, *now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.* And no reason can be given, why God should not be as well pleased *now*, with public worship in his own House, as he was under the Jewish economy; for numbers publicly to assemble, in order to worship God, is evidently a token of respect and reverence for him: But it is still more so, when they wait on him for that purpose, at his own House. And consequently God will more graciously hear and answer prayers and praises, when offered up in his Sanctuary, than elsewhere. Public worship, for several reasons, is extremely necessary and becoming, (as I have shown under the preceding head of this discourse) and so is peculiarly entitled to the divine attention and blessing.

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I have already proved that God is peculiarly present in Houses which are devoted to his worship: But what other valuable purpose can his peculiar presence there answer, or what else can be meant by it, but his being peculiarly ready to hear, answer, and bless those who worship him, as they ought to do, in his own House? What else can the special presence of God signify? The author and governor of all worlds is not a corporeal being: He cannot be confined within any place, or contained within any particular limits; *for heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him*: But universal extent is filled with the immensity of his presence and existence. The special presence of God, in any particular place, must therefore signify, that he is, in that place, peculiarly gracious and merciful. Hence David prayed that God would *send help from the Sanctuary*—and declared that *his way is in the Sanctuary*—that *from Mount Zion, the Lord commanded his blessing, even life for evermore*.—And Christ hath told us, that *where two or three are gathered together in his name* (for public worship, in acknowledgment of him) *there he is in the midst of them*.—From these observations it plainly appears, that God is treated with greater respect, honour, and reverence, by the public worship of his people; and will more graciously hear and answer their prayers and praises, when offered up in his Sanctuary, than elsewhere. But I proceed to show, in the III. And last place, the respect which is due from you to this House, considered as the Temple of God; and how you ought always to behave when you tread the Courts of the Lord's House.

There is something so great and affecting, so beautiful and solemn, in the appearance of a congregation, when united in religious worship, each one join-

joining both with heart and voice, in paying homage to the Almighty King of glory in his own Sanctuary; that nothing on earth besides can so nearly resemble the transcendently glorious exercises of heaven. For the blessed angels are represented as jointly paying, with united voices, their grateful, solemn, and joyous addresses, to the supreme governor of the universe, in such a language as this, *boly, boly, boly Lord God of hosts, which was, and is, and is to come; beaven and earth are full of thy glory: Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.—Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*—What can be more delightful at present, than to imitate the worshipping choirs of heaven, and to make that our pleasing employment now, which hereafter is to be our business and delight for ever? If we hope to enjoy the company of pure and holy spirits above, is it not extremely proper and necessary for us to learn their blessed practice while here on earth, by habituating ourselves to those religious exercises, in which the happiness of heaven consists, and by which we shall become more and more fit to be *partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, until we are ready to join our kindred spirits above?

And as this House is built for the honour of the Deity, and given up to these religious exercises, so let it be devoted entirely to this use. And as it is now set apart for the convenience of public worship and religious service, so take notice and remember, that it is dedicated to this holy purpose, and resigned up to the supreme Majesty of heaven. Let it therefore be, from this time forward, sacred to ALMIGHTY God, by the name of TRINITY-CHURCH.

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Now then let us all heartily and devoutly address the throne of grace, as Solomon did on a like occasion.—*Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place; Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. Let us beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto all the prayers that are made in this place.* May the holy spirit of God attend the exercises of this House, and the means of grace be ever successful here. May the reading of the word of God, and the preaching of the gospel in this House, through the rich blessing of God, produce the heavenly fruit of holiness, and lead many souls to eternal life. May all those, that shall here be taken into the covenant of grace, by baptism, be sanctified and constantly led by the blessed influences of the divine spirit: May they steadfastly adhere to their sacred engagements; “ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children; and be everlastingly rewarded by thee,” O heavenly Father. And may all those who shall here devote themselves to God, in the participation of the Lord’s supper, in commemoration of the death of their dear Redeemer, receive plentiful communications of the divine spirit; never disgrace their holy profession, but faithfully perform their sacred obligations, and grow up in holiness and comfort through faith, unto eternal salvation.

And grant, O heavenly Father, that thy people who shall wait upon thee, and devoutly offer up pure and holy worship, in this House of prayer, may enjoy all the privileges, and blessings of the covenant of grace, which is in all things well ordered and sure.—And when thy judgments are abroad in the earth, to punish the wickedness of men, and thy people in this place shall be distressed with mortal sickness, or any other

other sore calamity, if they shall repent and turn to thee, then, whatsoever prayer or supplication shall be made by any man, or by all thy people, in this place, when any, or every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this House: Hear thou from heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive; deliver them out of their calamity, send forth thy blessing upon them, grant thy mercy and favour unto all those who implore it, through the atonement of thy Son; and cause the hearts of the disobedient to turn unto the wisdom of the just; that thy people in this place may fear thee, and walk in thy ways. And being planted in the House of the Lord, may they flourish in the courts of thy House, O God, bring forth the fruit of thy spirit, even goodness, and righteousness, and truth; and enjoy both the blessings of thy House here, and life for evermore!

Grant that this people may speedily be supplied with an able, spiritual guide, who shall profitably explain to them the word of truth; be an ornament to his profession, a worthy Ambassador of God, and Messenger of Christ, a bright shining light in this Sanctuary: And give thy people in this place occasion to cry out, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Grant this, O Lord God, for Jesus Christ’s sake, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

And now, my brethren, you are to consider this House, as it truly is, the Temple of the living God: And to behave in it, at all times, “as under God’s “ more immediate presence and observation.” How dreadful is this place! surely this is none other than the House of God; this is the gate of heaven, said the apostle Patriarch Jacob, when he arose from his dream

or vision, in which the divine presence appeared in a glorious view. What can be expressed with a more majestic solemnity than this sentence which he uttered? *How dreadful!* as much as to say, though this is a desert which is wild and solitary, destitute of cultivation and the conveniences of life, where I have reclined my head on a pillow of stones; yet how awfully venerable is it, since the immortal God hath consecrated it with his holy presence! *Surely the Lord is in this place,* said he, *and I knew it not.*

When God appeared in visions formerly, and whereforever he was publicly worshipped, his people had a powerful sense of his presence, and, when in such places, always expressed the most awful veneration. So, my brethren, ought you to behave, when you are in this House. And to wait upon God here, ought to be your peculiar delight. Lord, *I have loved the habitation of thy House, and the place where thine honour dwelleth,* said holy David. And he knew no happiness on earth, equal to that of resorting to the Sanctuary of God: For when he was under the greatest personal distresses; when his own children rebelled against him, and fought his life, when his friends deserted him, and his enemies triumphantly reviled him; no trouble seemed to be so deeply fixed in his heart, as his banishment from the House of the Lord. *My soul longeth,* said he, *yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.—O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me, let them guide me unto the altar of God; unto God, my exceeding joy: Yea upon the harp will I praise thee, O God! my God!* How earnestly did the Prophet Daniel entreat his Maker that the Temple might be rebuilt? *Cause thy face*

face to shine upon thy Sanctuary, that is desolate. Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, said he, *and favour the dust thereof.* They had a veneration for the very ruins of the House of God; and loved the meer dust and rubbish of Sion, more than all the sumptuous palaces of Babylon. So ought you to regard and reverence this House, this Temple of the living God.

Now the very notion of reverential respect, properly includes two things: * An inward esteem of what we regard or reverence, and the expression of that esteem by suitable external actions. No one can properly be said to reverence any thing, unless from his heart he bears a regard to it. Without this, all outward show is but meer hypocrisy. And the esteem ought always to be in proportion to the worthiness of the object. There is a degree of reverence due to God, which can be due to none but God: He justly claims our supreme veneration. But then his House, and every thing besides, that relates immediately to divine worship, claim a lower degree of our reverence and respect.

In the present case, the reverence which we owe to this House of God, doth not arise from the meer building itself; but from its being a place solemnly dedicated to religious worship; where we, as being his children, are to receive the blessings of the Father of spirits: And where, as being the work of his hands, we are to worship, *fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.* The inward esteem and reverence which is due to the House of God, is in scripture expressed in the most affectionate language:—*How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!* said David. How hearty was the respect which our

* *Fide Warren in tandem.*

Saviour paid to the Temple, when, with a pious indignation, *he cast out them that sold and bought therein* ? And while we remember the pious regard and zeal of our blessed Lord, for *his Father's House of prayer*, and reverence this House only on God's account; we need not be afraid of carrying our veneration for it too high. The danger, my brethren, is that you will not retain in your minds such a powerful sense of the holiness of this House, and of the special presence of God in it, as becomes you. You are always to remember that the lofty Majesty of heaven is peculiarly present here; and that it is your duty to approach him with respectful awe; with godly fear and reverence, with an holy dread, and most profound submission.

But this brings me to speak of the other part of that reverence, which is due to the sacred Majesty of the invisible God, and to this edifice, wherein he is peculiarly present. This consists in such actions or outward behaviour, as are most expressive of your inward respect, and venerable regard for them. And I entreat you all to consider, that whosoever bears a sincere regard to any thing, will not fail, on proper occasions, to express it, by his outward carriage and demeanour. When we see a man treat another with rudeness or indifference; we do not fail to conclude that he wants a real respect for him. And so, when you see a man behave in God's House of prayer with an air of vanity and irreverence, you may also reasonably conclude, that he regards neither the House he is in, nor the presence and authority of that being, who hath commanded him to *keep his Sabbaths, and reverence his Sanctuary*.

But, for creatures so weak and degenerate, so mean and sinful as we are, the most submissive postures

sure that we are capable of, are hardly low and humble enough, when we approach the supreme Majesty of heaven and earth, in his own House; a God of infinite holiness, in whose presence the very angels, though a more noble order of beings than we are, and free from all guilt; yet are said to *veil their faces*, to express their solemn respect and reverence; and to *bow down* before him, in token of awful submission.

Therefore, whensoever you assemble in this House for worship, as a public acknowledgment of the most high God, by no means allow yourselves in any idle, inattentive, irreverend gestures, lest, under the hypocritical pretence of giving God your *hearts*, you afford him not even so much as the service of your *bodies*. And I entreat all those, who are fearful of showing the supreme God of heaven too much outward reverence and respect, to remember that *he* is the creator of their bodies as well as their souls: That *he* preserves and supports them both; and that *he* requires, and hath an equal right to the worship and service of both. *Glorify God in your body*, saith St. Paul, *and in your spirit, which are God's*. And again saith he, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*. Such a service is very agreeable to reason, which teaches us, that he who made the body, hath a right to the worship and service of it.

One would think experience alone sufficient to prove to a Christian, the efficacy of a serious, humble, outward deportment of the body, in order to excite and cherish in the soul a sincere and lively devotion. Christ, our blessed Redeemer, who did not come into the world to encourage superstition; yet, when he earnestly prayed, just before his crucifixion, that if

it were possible, that cup might pass from him, did not refuse the most humble posture; but kneeled down upon the ground. And can any who pretend to *name the name of Christ*, refuse to follow his example? Will they presume to address God with less deference than his own Son our Lord and Master did! Will they dare to be so rude and indecent, so bold and unbecoming; when they are in the special presence of the sacred Majesty of heaven, as to compose themselves into a sleepy posture, or behave themselves as carelessly as though they were in their own houses, without appearing to have the least veneration for God's Sanctuary, and the worship of their Maker, who can destroy them in a moment, with the breath of his mouth! Is it not, my brethren, prodigious strange, that men, while they pretend to honour God, should affront him to his face! But it is still more wonderful, if possible, that any of the professors of Christianity should be deluded with such false notions of reverence, as to imagine that their outward behaviour, such as *kneeling at prayers, bowing at the name of Jesus*, in the rehearsal of what they believe, *standing up* when the Psalms are read or sung, and the like, is so far from being any part of religious reverence, or divine worship, as justly to deserve the name of superstition! Not considering that the worship of the body, is as really *our duty* as that of the soul: And that it is absolutely impossible for our souls to be well affected and piously devout, while we do *wilfully or scornfully* refuse to honour and reverence God with our bodies, in the manner that St. Paul exhorts us to do.

Therefore, my brethren, I do entreat you, by no means to neglect bodily worship, which is your indispensable duty, and very useful to recall your wan-

wandering thoughts, to the exercises of inward devotion, and to increase and keep up your religious zeal and piety. Be very careful to avoid all indecent, careless, indifferent, lolling, slovenly gestures, in the public worship of Almighty God. Do not stand up when you are commanded to kneel, nor sit down when the rules of the common prayer require you to stand; but know assuredly, that all inclination to oppose these rules and orders is irregular, and proceeds either from inattention, laziness, indifference, a disputatious temper of mind, or from that perverse pride and obstinacy, which are owing to the vile suggestions of the great enemy of mankind.

A mind truly pious and devout, will unavoidably show its sincerity, by an humble, religious, and reverential deportment of body in the House of God. And I think it must be morally impossible, for men, who have a sincere regard for religion, to come to Church, without discovering, while in the peculiar presence of their Maker, some tokens of religious reverence, in their bodily behaviour. A sincerely good man is sensible of the great duty and advantage of waiting upon God in his House: He so well considers his own infirmities, and hath so solemn a veneration for the divine presence, that, while he is in the exercise of devotion, and all the time that he remains in the House of God, he imagines no care nor circumspicion too great, for the suitable conduct both of body and soul. Whereas many people attend public worship in God's Sanctuary, with such a careless indifference, as amounts to a strong indication of a wicked and perverse, of an obdurate and profane temper of mind: So that we have just reason to suspect, and fear, that the inward disposition of

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their souls is of the very same cast with the haughty negligence, and lazy indecency; of their bodily deportment.

But, "in order to your duly reverencing this Sanctuary of the most high God, you must behave in it "with that inward piety, and that outward humility, which so augments a presence, and so mentions a concern, require of you." And that ye may do these things the better, you ought to prepare yourselves well beforehand: Which is peculiarly proper for *us* of the Church of England, since we may know, before we begin, exactly what we have to do: And have therefore a great advantage in preparing for the due performance of it.

When you offer up your public addresses to God in this House, though the words are ready prepared for you to utter, yet you have enough to employ you, in presenting them to the throne of grace, with zealous attention and undisturbed devotion. They only, who heartily and affectionately offer up to God the words which they use (whether by the assistance of a book, or without) can be truly said to pray as they ought. But since we are weak and imperfect creatures, unable to transact many things at one and the same time, it is evidently most proper for us, when we publicly worship God in his own House, to have nothing else to do, for the exercise of the soul, but to employ it in offering up, with fervent devotion, what we have very often considered, and do well understand: That we may not spend our time in studying how to tickle each other's ears, and rack our heads with invention, while our hearts ought to glow with the most solemn devotion: And that we may not be employed in considering the new petitions which we hear, and whether they are fit for

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us to join in, while we ought to do homage to God with our voices, and to reverence him with the warm affections of our hearts. He that useth our liturgy in public worship, with that holy devotion of soul which he ought, "can never complain that forms of "prayer stint the spirit, or make men lazy and "idle."

To make you sincerely good and pious, whether you will or no, is not in the power of the Church of England. All our Church can do, is to assist you, in the best manner, concerning your devotions, and to lead you in the surest and most direct course to heaven: And this she hath done with peculiar wisdom and piety. And if you comply with her directions, you will reap the blessed benefit, and rejoice in so great a privilege. But if you will not observe the rules prescribed, and accordingly should not receive any manner of *good* to your souls; yet that will not be the fault of the Church, but entirely your own.—Therefore I exhort and intreat you all, for the honour of Christianity, for the glory of God, and for the benefit of your own immortal souls, to make a right use of our public liturgy. In order to which, you must often peruse it; take care to understand it; and prepare yourselves for the due performance of *your part* in it. And to assist you, I will now, in a few words, explain to you the right use of our morning and evening service.

Our public devotions begin with two or three short sentences of Scripture, expressive of our wickedness, and of the mercy of God: After which is pronounced by the minister, "a serious exhortation to repentance; that the minds of the people may be impressed with a humble sense of their sins, that they may recollect their many iniquities, and that they

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may be properly disposed to enter upon the great duty of repentance: Accordingly, then followeth a general confession of sins, imploring forgiveness; to be said by the whole congregation, by minister and people alternately, with a solemn voice, *all kneeling*, and with a truly humble and penitent heart. After which, the priest alone uttereth the absolution; which is a declaration that God will be merciful to all true penitents. And when this is performed, the remembrance of God's mercy will tend to make us submissive, dutiful, and thankful. Then we may, with comfortable assurance, call God our Father, in that form which Christ hath taught us. Accordingly the minister and people, all as one, repeat the Lord's prayer. Thus the honest Churchman, the pious Christian, receives divine comfort in the House of God: For though he frequently offendeth through the infirmity of his nature; yet he doth as often repent, and always, when he is in the Sanctuary, implore pardon. And so, by constantly mortifying and bewailing his sins, he obtains an habitual aversion to them: And from the sincerity of his repentance, derives a joyful hope of pardon, and of the favour of his Maker, through the gracious mediation of his kind Redeemer.

The Psalms, which consist chiefly in praises, come next in our liturgy: And in order to the due performance of this part of our worship, we must frequently and attentively consider the Majesty and goodness of God. And our minds, being properly affected therewith, will be prepared to hear, with dutiful attention, the portions of scripture read by the minister: And we shall be disposed to receive them as spoken to ourselves; since *all scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for*

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reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness.—And if we are thankful to God, as we ought to be, for the light of revelation, we shall be disposed to utter, with a heavenly transport of joy and devotion, among others, that most divine anthem, “we praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be “the Lord.” Thus we shall *serve the Lord with gladness*, praise him publicly with cheerfulness, and take peculiar delight in the courts of the House of our God.

The remaining part, both of our morning and evening service, doth most intimately concern our temporal and eternal interest: And consists in a number of petitions, for all those good things which we need, relating both to *this* life, and to *that* which is to come. And that we may perform this part of our public service to God's acceptance, and by his blessing obtain what we ask for, it is absolutely necessary that we pray with faith and humility: And be also well persuaded, that we ask for nothing but what is both lawful and expedient. And in order to this, we must frequently and seriously consider what it is we pray for. Therefore it is very necessary for you to read and examine, with diligent attention, the common prayers, and the several directions contained in the rubricks. And I assure you, that the liturgy of the Church of England is the best collection, both of prayers, and rules for public worship, that can be found among all human compositions. And as you have the best assistance for publicly worshipping the supreme Lord of the universe, that human wisdom hath ever yet contrived; so it will greatly increase your condemnation, if you neglect to make a good use of it.

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I shall not, at this time, undertake to consider, in any particular manner, the case of those who dissent from our solemn and divine method of worship, for the sake of extemporary prayers, and undigested effusions. Let me only observe, that those who complain, that they cannot be religiously devout in our form of worship, will hardly be sincerely so in their own.

He that intimately knows the secrets of all hearts, bought not to be addressed with rashness and inconsideration: Nor to be treated with idleness or wantonness. But we must pray with faith and zealous attention, with humble reverence and sincere devotion, in order to meet with divine acceptance. And he that is not affected with the humility, solemnity and piety of the public prayers of the Church of England, must, I am sure, be either stupidly inattentive, or perversely stubborn, or perhaps otherwise extremely vicious in his disposition and behaviour.

And as to bodily worship, it must be very improper to leave every one to follow all the whims that can be started by his own private fancy, either to sit, stand, or kneel, just as he pleases. Therefore, like a wife and good mother, tenderly concerned for the true interest of her spiritual children, our Church hath directed and commanded us, to behave in each part of our public worship, as she judged to be most becoming. When we earnestly implore the greatest of mercies, such as the forgiveness of our sins, the influences of the divine spirit, deliverance from all calamities, the continual preservation of our souls, of our bodies and estates, and the mercy and favour of God towards others, we are required to kneel. While the word of God is read or preached to us, we are allowed to sit down, provided we are serious and attentive,

attentive, and behave with proper decency. And when we are rehearsing the creeds, which contain the substance of our Christian belief, or while some part of the gospel, particularly adapted to the season, is read to us, we are commanded to stand up, in token of respectful reverence. And, at all times, when we either read or sing the praises of God, as they are contained in the Psalms, or those Hymns which we use, let us by no means refuse to stand up, which is the most becoming posture for thanksgiving and praise. David exhorts to *praise the Lord—STANDING in the Lord's House*. And we read, concerning the worship at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, that 'when *the Priests and Levites praised the Lord—all Israel stood*. Therefore, my brethren, you ought strictly to conform to all the rules and directions of the Church of England, respecting public worship, since they are agreeable to the highest reason, plainly warranted by sacred scripture, and the most of them no less than divine commands.—I need not explain to you any more of the particulars of our worship: They are all to be found distinctly set down in the Common Prayer-Book; to that I refer you.

After what hath been said, is it not surprising, that any should be so stubborn and disobedient, as to dissent from the directions of our liturgy, which are so wise and rational; or from our method of worship, which is so easy and becoming, so pious and humble, so plain, beautiful and solemn? Since the worship of the Church of England doth agree so exactly with reason, with the commands, exhortations, and pious examples which are recorded in holy scripture; let it be suitably impressed on your minds, that if you willfully refuse to comply with it, you will most certainly incur the vengeance of heaven, for disobedience to
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your proper governors, both in Church and State; Because your compliance with the liturgy, is required and commanded by the authority of both; whom you are bound to obey in every thing that they enjoin, which is not forbidden by the laws of God. But though I accuse people of irreverence, for not standing when public praises or thanksgivings are offered up, or for not kneeling in the time of solemn public prayer; yet I know very well, that many will speak of these attitudes as matters of indifference, notwithstanding they are both absolutely commanded in holy writ, and are also agreeable to the constant example of all the scripture worthies. But suppose they were indifferent, one might reasonably imagine, that no wise or good man would run the risque of drawing upon himself the displeasure of heaven, for not complying with the commands of lawful authority, in what is so easy to be performed, and in what he confesseth to be indifferent, and so not sinful. *Submit yourselves, saith St. Peter, to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake.*—And to the same effect are the following words of St. Paul, *let every soul be subject unto the bigger power; for there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

You may, with very little trouble, stand and kneel in public worship, as you are commanded: But the evils which you incur by refusing so to do, are great. A small portion of knowledge, with an honest, humble, and obedient heart, renders us capable of the spiritual graces of the Holy Ghost. But when we wilfully and stubbornly refuse to comply with the ordinances both of God and men; and *bring out for ourselves broken cisterns, by our own invention;*

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it must be just and right for God to resign us up to hardness of heart. For it is altogether just, that he, who will not be happy, in the method which Christ hath provided, should be left to be miserable in his own way. Let this consideration be a motive with you, always to behave in this House of God, as he hath commanded you, in these words, namely, *reverence my Sanctuary*; and in subordination to him, comply with all the directions of your lawful superiors. And I intreat you to suffer no evasions or excuses to deter you from it. Do not consider it as a small, indifferent matter: For be assured, you will find it far otherwise in the end.

But to conclude, I intreat of you all, seriously to consider what you have now heard: And I earnestly wish it may have its due effect upon you.—You have heard that God is peculiarly present in, and hath a great regard for, his House.—This should fix in your minds a respectful reverence for this House, which hath now been, in a solemn manner, dedicated to the most high God. You are to consider it as his peculiar property; so that you have no right to use it, except in his immediate service. And you ought to be awfully afraid of profaning it; since God is jealous for his honour, and for the place where his honour dwelleth: Remember therefore, and never forget, that this is the Temple of God.

Again, you have heard that public worship, performed in the House of God, is peculiarly expressive of reverence for him, and very acceptable to him. This ought to make you zealous and constant in attending public worship in this House: Since you have more reason to expect a blessing here, than elsewhere. F

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SEAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF
THE GOSPEL.



REV. SAMUEL JOHNSON, D.D.
Ordained 1722.

36 A DEDICATION SERMON.

And in the last place, you have heard very particularly, what respect you owe to this House; and how you ought to behave in it. I beseech you therefore, to let these instructions sink deep into your hearts. Whensoever you come here, remember that you are in the immediate presence of him, who made and supporteth all worlds; who knows your most secret thoughts, and will hereafter reward or punish every one of you *according to the deeds done in the body*. Remember that the inhabitants of heaven are represented to us as worshipping God jointly and in unity: Not by one, representing the remainder; but each acting for himself, in uniformity *with* the rest. Therefore accustom yourselves *now* to worship God jointly and uniformly in public, and to carry on an open and apparent part of divine service in God's Sanctuary on earth, that it may be natural and easy for you hereafter to join the Church triumphant, in alternate and uniform, in public and united worship, at the throne of divine Majesty in heaven. And that this may be the delightful employment of us all, for ever and ever, God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now therefore to the one, infinitely wise, good, and eternal God, in three persons, be rendered all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, might, majesty and dominion, world without end. Amen.

F I N I S.

